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9th Meeting
Wednesday, 28 September 1994, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Address by Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, President of the Republic of Armenia

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Armenia.

Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, President of the Republic of Armenia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Armenia, His Excellency Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ter-Petrossian *(interpretation from French):* May I begin by warmly congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the forty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I would also like to express my appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Samuel Insanally, and to thank him for his contribution to accomplishing the tasks of the last session. Further, I wish to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the vision with which he has guided the Organization and for his tireless efforts to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security.

The collapse of the old order and the emergence of new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe and, soon after, in the former Soviet Union have presented the world with a major challenge. In a period of tremendous change, many difficulties and conflicts have arisen. Some of these difficulties come as immediate by-products of rapid and haphazard transformations, while others are surfacing for the first time after decades of inadequate stop-gap measures. Further, if the reform programmes have so far failed to yield all the benefits expected, this is also due to an under-estimation of the differences in the initial conditions of the countries in transition.

The pace and comprehensiveness of economic reforms will vary from country to country. However, the reform process will inevitably be lengthy, as it involves wholesale changes in price mechanisms, in the concept of property, in industrial structures and in legal, commercial and financial institutions, as well as the creation of social safety nets for the most vulnerable segments of the population, whose situation will be worsened by the high cost of the reforms.

As with all the former Soviet Republics, Armenia's economy has been badly strained by the changes which followed the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the difficult transition to a market economy. It is further crippled by its over-reliance on trade with the former Soviet Republics; the blockade of transportation routes imposed by neighbouring Azerbaijan; an embargo by Turkey; and the damage inflicted by the disastrous earthquake in 1988. Other external conditions, such as

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the disruption of transport due to the difficulties faced by Georgia, have exacerbated the situation, contributing to the decline in Armenia's industrial productivity. The legacy of the Soviet period, with its inefficiencies and excessive horizontal integration, has worsened the effects of the blockade.

Despite these difficulties, the Armenian Government has begun implementing significant structural reforms to create a healthy market economy, beginning with the privatization process launched soon after the Armenian National Movement came to power in 1990. Indeed, the commitment to transform the centrally planned economy into a market economy stems from the philosophy of the democratic movement in Armenia and is seen as an integral part of the transition to a democratic State.

In turn, a free market economy will flourish in a stable democracy, able to promote and underpin economic development. Armenia today is a country with more than 30 registered political parties. It has proclaimed freedom of the press, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, and it has laws guaranteeing civil and political rights. Three free elections have already been held in Armenia: parliamentary and presidential elections and a referendum on independence. The upcoming referendum on the Constitution and the elections of the National Assembly and the President of the Republic will reaffirm the establishment of a democratic tradition.

Democracy is fundamental to the process of economic transformation, which can be divided into three phases, more or less typical for all countries in transition: institutional reforms; long-term investments and changes of technological structures; and integration into international markets. It is imperative, however, to set priorities and to identify the most pressing issues of the moment. In my opinion, Armenia is at the end of the first phase, which includes the creation of a legal framework for economic reform, within which private economic activity can take place, a framework ensuring that contracts are enforced and that private property is protected; freeing of prices; privatization; adoption of a national currency; financial and budgetary stabilization; and improvement in the balance of payments. We have already accomplished 80 per cent of this phase.

Armenia has distinguished itself as the first among the former Soviet Republics to privatize the ownership of agricultural land and livestock production. The privatization of small and medium businesses as well as large enterprises is well under way. In late 1993, with the collapse of the rouble zone, Armenia faced a monetary crisis. The uncontrollable flow of old Soviet roubles into Armenia and Armenia's subsequent inability to control monetary policy on its own territory forced the Government in November 1993 prematurely to introduce a national currency, the *dram*. The Government is currently implementing a programme based on controlling and lowering the inflation rate, enforcing a strict budget, controlling fiscal expenditures and targeting assistance to the most vulnerable groups.

Basic reforms have been undertaken in the banking sector, the first of which was to break down the mono-bank system of central planning into a two-tiered system comprising a central bank and a group of commercial banks.

In Armenia, as in all the emerging democracies, there is no historical precedent for the economic transition. It requires lasting commitment and patience as well as the substantial support of the international community. Of course neither short- and medium-term adjustment programmes nor long-term development strategies can hope to succeed fully without sustained growth in the world economy and favourable external conditions.

We recognize that there is no single model of transition to be prescribed for all countries or, even more narrowly, for all post-communist societies as a whole. To ensure success for United Nations efforts in the countries in transition the Organization must tailor its involvement to each country's resources and procedures, giving priority to programmes rather than to projects. That approach essentially boils down to the definition of key objectives for each programme that will reflect the priorities of the national Government and the organization of assistance around the achievement of those goals, which can be accomplished by strengthening the role of the Resident Coordinator system.

Armenia appreciates the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development as an important and necessary complement to "An Agenda for Peace". It is a comprehensive and thoughtful reflection upon the various dimensions of development and the role of the United Nations in that connection. At the recently held world gatherings on development there was broad agreement that the Agenda should be sustained by an action-oriented framework and practical proposals aimed at resolving existing imbalances in the various development areas. We look forward to the further elaboration of the Agenda

for Development by the Secretary-General through a number of concrete proposals with regard to the reform of both the United Nations system and the intergovernmental consultative machinery for development, as well as specific recommendations for greater coordination within the United Nations as a whole, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the proposed World Trade Organization. Such an elaboration is needed if the Agenda is to lead to a global partnership for development.

Armenia looks forward to participating in and contributing to the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. The World Summit, to be held in the United Nations fiftieth anniversary year, is a landmark event and will build upon the commitments of a series of United Nations global gatherings, including the 1990 World Summit for Children, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, and it will be followed by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. These are all key events in the process of international consensus-building.

Development and human rights are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. There can be no genuine long-term development without respect for the full spectrum of the rights of individuals. The Vienna Conference on Human Rights held last year deepened the understanding of the significance of human rights for stability, freedom, peace, progress and justice. The establishment of the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was vital to a more effective implementation of the principles of human rights. Member States must continue to work to increase the effectiveness of existing United Nations human-rights mechanisms and to support the High Commissioner in the fulfilment of his mandate.

Armenia considers self-determination in its multitude of manifestations to be an inalienable human right. Armenia's position on the Nagorny Karabakh conflict has been clear and consistent from the start. Armenia has no territorial claims against Azerbaijan. The conflict is between the people of Nagorny Karabakh, who are striving for self-determination, and the Azerbaijani Government, which is refusing to address the rights of the people of Nagorny Karabakh. Armenia provides moral, diplomatic and humanitarian assistance to the people of Nagorny Karabakh, and it cannot accept a military solution which can only mean the genocide or deportation of the population of Nagorny Karabakh.

While the Nagorny Karabakh conflict has gone through periods of both intense fighting and relative calm since I spoke here two years ago, there has never before been a period in the five-year history of the conflict when a cease-fire has taken hold for so long. I am pleased to inform the Assembly today that the cease-fire of 12 May 1994, which was mediated by the Russian Federation, is in general being maintained. But what is more gratifying and encouraging is that, through direct and immediate contacts between the parties to the conflict, the *de facto* 12 May cease-fire was formalized on 27 July 1994, and on 28 August 1994 the parties reaffirmed their commitment to the cease-fire until such time as a political document has been signed.

Armenia congratulates the main parties to the conflict for their commitment to maintain the cease-fire and to engage in direct dialogue. Armenia views this as an important confidence-building measure, as a major step towards the consolidation of the cease-fire and as a sign of a strong commitment to the successful conclusion of the current negotiations, which in turn will make possible the solution of the problem at the Minsk Conference of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Clearly, the conflict has entered a new phase, in which the parties have demonstrated their desire for peace.

Our new challenge, and the priority for Armenia, is the consolidation of the cease-fire and the establishment of peace. There is a historic opportunity today to end the conflict. But the cause of peace requires the active, unified support of the international community to consolidate the cease-fire. The cumulative impact of the distrust of the past five years, on the one hand, and the lack of international measures to support consolidation, on the other hand, may increase the current uncertainty and threaten the fragile cease-fire.

There is no doubt that, beyond the cessation of hostilities, a lasting peace will mostly depend on the ability of the main parties to the conflict and of the international community to develop innovative and internationally approved mechanisms for its establishment and maintenance.

The primary concern for Armenia has been, and remains, the security of the people of Nagorny Karabakh. Both Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh have repeatedly expressed their readiness to comply with the relevant

Security Council resolutions. A lasting peace can be achieved only by ensuring the irreversibility of the peace process through the deployment of international security forces between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh until such time as a negotiated solution to the problem of Nagorny Karabakh has been reached, with the full participation of Nagorny Karabakh at the CSCE Minsk Conference.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is in direct contradiction of the peacemaking efforts of the United Nations. Armenia considers tnat only the unconditional and indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will ensure that the Treaty serves its purpose. It is encouraging that negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty have made important progress over the past year, and we hope that a text satisfactory to all can be agreed on soon.

We support the integration of multilateral disarmament with United Nations activities relat to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building.

The debate in the General Assembly Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council has been very useful. Virtually all States Members of the United Nations favour an increase in the membership of the Security Council to reflect the radical changes in the world and the increase in the Organization's overall membership. However, an increase in membership should not diminish the Council's efficiency. It is necessary here to note that the Council has taken a number of constructive steps to improve its transparency and its communication with non-members. The Security Council should also be better able to respond to emerging threats and disputes before they escalate into armed conflict. With improved coordination of United Nations organizations and agencies devoted to economic and social progress, the Economic and Social Council could better assist the Security Council and advise it of potential emergencies arising out of economic and social conditions. Therefore, Armenia fully supports the call for restructuring of the Economic and Social Council and for the possible establishment of an economic security council.

Improving the administrative performance of the United Nations is another priority. Armenia welcomes the current initiatives to streamline the Organization's administrative and management structures and procedures to meet the demands now being made of the United Nations. In particular, we supported the United States initiative, and we are pleased that the General Assembly has created the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

Let me return for a moment to the theme I began with. In this period of unprecedented change, many hardships - both expected and unforeseen - have arisen. The present era, full of challenge and hope, gives us new faith in the United Nations as the best and most appropriate forum for integrating all the interests of the various peoples of the world, which are too fragmented today. Universal harmony can be established only when discords are peacefully resolved and full cooperation between nations is achieved. The United Nations, strengthened by the noble principles and objectives enshrined in its Charter, and facing new responsibilities and tasks, can and must lead the way to a better organized and more harmonious world.

Let me conclude by wishing the General Assembly every success in the demanding work it faces during this session.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Armenia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, President of the Republic of Armenia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Franjo Tudjman, President of the Republic of Croatia

The President (interpretation from French): The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Franjo Tudjman, President of the Republic of Croatia.

President Franco Tudjman, President of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (interpretation from French): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Croatia, His Excellency Mr. Franjo Tudjman, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Tudjman (Croatia) *(spoke in Croatian; English text furnished by the delegation):* It is my particular privilege and pleasure to address the General

Assembly of the United Nations at the beginning of its forty-ninth session.

I believe we all agree that the appearance of any statesman before the General Assembly is a great moment for moral and political reconsideration of one's own reflections and responsibilities towards the international public. This applies equally to the representatives of the esteemed founder States and to us who represent young democracies. This is an opportunity to present our views on the problems affecting our countries, but also on all other issues of importance for the global Organization. This is also an opportunity to compare, with the utmost seriousness, the lofty ideals incorporated in the United Nations Charter with the difficulties and intricacies of daily achieving political agreement for their realization.

The noble fundamental principles of the United Nations governing the rights and obligations of individuals, nations and States generally agree with the basic principles underlying all world religions and philosophies, as well as the fundamental laws of individual States. Yet we are still painstakingly seeking a consensus on a new and just international order that would unite and harmonize the lofty goals of the United Nations Charter and the humanistic Weltänschauung with the visions of the new global order and with the specific ideals and interests of individual States. Unfortunately, many countries, such as my own, Croatia, which labours under difficulties owing to the disintegration of one regional international order and the establishment of another new order, are paying the highest human, material and political price for the imperfection of the world in which we live.

In addressing the General Assembly as Head of the Croatian State and the highest representative of the Croatian people, I can note with satisfaction that the international position of Croatia has been strengthened and furthered in spite of all the problems affecting the actions of the international community. In only a few years since its independence and international recognition, Croatia has become a fully fledged and equal international citizen, having reinforced its position in the international community and expanded its network of bilateral relations with almost all States and international agencies. Moreover, Croatia has become a key factor in the establishment of the new regional order in South-eastern Europe and a recognized and important partner of the super-Powers and of the international community as a whole in the resolution of the intricate crisis, currently the most severe international crisis in this part of the world, in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The adverse experience of the Croatian people throughout their history, and particularly over the past few years of the renewal of Croatian statehood, has taught us that no sublime principle recorded in the United Nations Charter and in international law is automatically attainable - even less is it guaranteed - if the people concerned are not determined to attain it; if they are not prepared to offer to make a high degree of sacrifice in the achievement of their right to life and freedom; and if they do not succeed, by virtue of their strength and decisions, in bringing their national interests into line with the essential interests of the international community.

Despite the inalienable right of the Croatian people - one of the oldest European peoples - to self-determination and to the renewal of their own State, despite the blatant barbaric aggression aimed at territorial conquest, the genocidal expulsion of the population and the destruction of the most precious cultural heritage of the Croatian people, such as Vukovar and Dubrovnik, the Croats would never have won the right to self-determination, to their State, to freedom and independence, had they not been prepared to make human and material sacrifices, had they not shown a firm nation-building will, with which they have resolutely asserted themselves as a member of the international community, while manifesting their readiness to be a constructive force in the development of the new international order to replace the unviable and failed old system.

It is the duty of all of us - and especially of this, the highest global authority - to take more determined and more effective steps in the quest for means to break this vicious circle of suffering by individuals and peoples wrought by war. As the highest representatives of our States and peoples, we are morally and politically obliged to create an international order, with appropriate mechanisms, capable of efficiently defending the rights of each nation or group, and especially of small and young States. What we need are such mechanisms of the highest global Organization that can resolutely prevent or punish any violation of the fundamental principles of international law.

Obviously, this also implies safeguarding the achievement of such rights and of generally accepted principles in a democratic way, so that each and every right does not have to be won the hardest way, with the blood of innocent lives, because such a way burdens the collective memory with covert hatreds, bias and

vengefulness, stirring up new divisions and even more destructive internal and regional crises.

This applies to crises in the areas of the former Yugoslavia, just as it does to those in Rwanda, Somalia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, South Asia, Africa or America. It is precisely the crisis in the former Yugoslavia that has shown the immense evil that can be done by petty political exploitation of historical myths about collective guilt or historical injustice, about a conspiracy of the whole world against a single people, and by the emphasizing of the messianic role of a people to justify their conquest-minded policy, causing a great deal of harm not only to those threatened by such imperialistic policies, but also to the people themselves, who fall victim to their own fallacies and motives, which are unacceptable and detrimental to the international community.

After the collapse of the bloc division of the world and the disintegration of many multinational States, we are faced with the task of building a new international order. All past experience suggests that the task is very difficult. To be successful, we need first and foremost a mechanism for diplomatic and political negotiation, for building confidence and for patiently overcoming real problems stemming from objectively differing interests. In cases where political efforts are obviously futile, the United Nations must have a more efficient mechanism to achieve and even impose solutions serving the interests of international peace and stability. However, for reasons of realpolitik and of the balance of interests and forces, in neither case should this contradict the fundamental principles of this Organization. It should be borne in mind that the mechanism for establishing and defending the new international order should not merely serve the coordination of the interests of the super-Powers, but must reflect their highest responsibility in dealing with regional crises, while being designed and structured to strengthen the security and progress of small or jeopardized members of the international community, which account for the greater part of mankind. The United Nations must be qualified to guarantee, within the international order, equal conditions in terms of freedom, progress and equality for all the members of the international community.

The collapse of communism and of the bipolar division of the world has increased hopes for a world of greater justice and security for all. However, we must be aware of the fact that the collapse of the communist bloc and of multinational States has inevitably produced temporarily destabilizing effects in the international order. In this context, it should be noted that the proclamation of sovereign national States has mainly created positive conditions for the new international order, although in some cases, where nationalism has degenerated into chauvinist-extremist trends, or even into conquest-minded aggression, the effect has been negative. However, the essential point of these historical vicissitudes is the awareness of the fact that the endeavour of small peoples to attain statehood - meaning their political, cultural and economic identity and their personality within the international order - has made the greatest contribution to the collapse of communist totalitarianism and to the democratization of many countries. The full democratization of international relations is not possible without such democratization of internal political systems.

The security of new small States has become today the key to stability in every region and it should provide the groundwork for new collective security systems. Only their complete security and equality can make them equal factors of civilizational and functional integration in specific areas and within the global order as a whole. The peoples of small countries will eagerly accept civilizational integration if it is not to the detriment of the individual quality of their State, culture and economy. Only such safeguarding of national individuality within civilizational integration can produce sound foundations for functional multilateralism in the new international order. Otherwise, the myths and prejudices of the past will continue to provide grounds for new conflicts and even clashes between civilizations. The disturbing scale which differences between civilizations can assume is clearly manifested in the former Yugoslavia, where local aggression threatens to expand even into a conflict involving three civilizational religious blocs unless the crisis, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is resolutely brought to an end. Croatia has always supported a political solution by accepting the normalization of relations with all neighbours, even those of whose aggression we were victims, in order not only to create, on an equal footing, the prerequisites for a new international order but also to bring about a productive blending of the different civilizations facing one another in this part of the world.

In view of the current state of affairs worldwide, we support a thorough organizational reform of the United Nations in order to improve both its responsibility and its efficiency in dealing with the pressing problems of humankind. Problems such as uneven development, population growth, the ecological balance of the planet, human and collective rights, functional global integration, and particularly crisis points and military hot spots, call

for a more effective organization of the highest international agency. We need an Organization which could have a more efficient bearing on establishing equal standards and obligations for all countries, and which would be entitled, in crises or on key issues affecting the development of humankind and life on our planet, "to encroach", on behalf of the global community, upon internal affairs of States. The international community should have, within the United Nations, multilateral mechanisms capable of dealing more efficiently with pressing crises, and developmental, environmental and technological challenges now facing humankind.

In this context careful consideration is required of the role of the General Assembly. Its activity must be credible, but it nevertheless cannot assume the role of a global parliament to the detriment of the sovereignty of Member States. Experience suggests that a clearer division of responsibility among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council is required.

Regional conflicts have become the chief problem now confronting the international community - not only because of the threat posed to international peace but also because they can cause terrible human disasters such as those in Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Somalia. And, of course, they also block regional developmental processes, and result in scarcely reparable ecological damage and destruction of the natural and cultural heritage of entire areas.

Such a state of affairs requires first a reform of the Security Council.

The new global order can no longer be based only on the coalition of the victors in the Second World War, or on the nuclear club of the great Powers. It must reflect new democratic, economic and regional realities which necessarily lead to permanent Security Council membership and enhanced regional responsibility for countries such as Germany or Japan, and also some regional representatives of the so-called third world. On the other hand, the reform of the Security Council ought to avoid solutions which would, because of the increased number of members, make decision-making more difficult and the Council inefficient. The efficiency and credibility of the Security Council should be substantially strengthened in order to resolve the main problems related to international security, especially in conflicts causing military conflagration, first of all by reducing the gap between the content of the enacted resolutions and the possibility of their enforcement. All States of the world, and particularly the great Powers which have an enhanced responsibility within such a system, should in good faith make adequate economic and military instruments continuously available to the Security Council so that its decisions can be implemented. The peacemaking mediation of the global Organization must evolve from a static freezing of the conflict and curbing its expansion, into a mechanism capable of preventing the development of the crisis in a timely manner and of eliminating the consequences that are already present.

In some cases the very decisions of the Security Council will suffice to stop and resolve the crisis, but sometimes a demonstration of firmness will be required.

The international community must develop more systematic mechanisms to punish those States that do not accept or that violate Security Council decisions. The enforcement of international political or economic isolation of the aggressor, with concurrent compensation for neighbouring States which are indirect victims of such isolation, should be made even more effective. Sanctions are becoming an instrument used at an ever increasing rate when there is no political consensus, or will to resort to more energetic means, but they can produce the wanted effect only if implemented consistently within the scope of systematic pressure.

The democratization of the international order entails a greater focus on the protection of human rights, including also punishment for violations of humanitarian law and the law of war. Croatia has endorsed the establishment of the War Crimes Tribunal in the area of the former Yugoslavia. Croatia likewise supports the establishment of a permanent international institution which would deal with the most severe violations of humanitarian law, whether in Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia or Haiti. However, the international community should also devise ways and means to prosecute the perpetrators of crimes from those aggressor countries which refuse to cooperate with the Tribunal.

Croatia proposes the provision of a permanent peace-keeping task force for the intervention requirements of the Security Council, involving special military units made available, through agreement with a specific number of countries for Security Council requirements. We believe that this could forestall the flaring up of many regional crises, or contribute to their rapid prevention. Such international forces should have a broader mandate in terms of the use of force, not only for their own

protection but also for the energetic implementation of all Security Council resolutions - from humanitarian objectives to disarmament and demilitarization. The peace-keeping force should be set up so that the national contingents within it implement the decisions of the Security Council and not the specific policies of their countries.

The proliferation of regional crises confronts the United Nations with ever-increasing tasks which the Security Council cannot fulfil successfully with its limited resources. This suggests the need for the Security Council to assign the implementation of its decisions to regional organizations as well. This in turn requires the redefinition and strengthening of the role of regional organizations within the collective security system. Each crisis point should be dealt with by appreciating all specific features and by realistically evaluating the possible scope of regional systems in the implementation of Security Council decisions.

The solutions at which we aim in the regional crisis affecting the area of the former Yugoslavia, as well as elsewhere, must proceed from the fundamental tenets of international law in order to arrive at a just and lasting solution which, in order to be acceptable, also implies compromise in terms of detail, but not in terms of the essential issues.

Croatia is very encouraged by the increasingly successful peace developments in the Middle East, which demonstrate the patience and wisdom of both the Israeli and the Arab sides. We firmly believe that similar positive endeavours are also possible in South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans if they win the necessary united support and determination of the great Powers.

Croatia welcomes the peaceful transfer of power to the majority people in South Africa after decades of internal and regional instability. South Africa is the best proof that there is no alternative to the equality of all citizens of a State.

We also welcome the involvement of the international community in Rwanda, which, although it has not, unfortunately, prevented a human disaster on a scale beyond description, has at least stopped the spiral of death and lawlessness. We continue to support the current efforts to stabilize Rwanda and to prevent the revival and expansion of the conflict.

The agreement of the international community to finally stop the agony of Haiti and establish a democratic order there is also encouraging. We similarly welcome the successful processes of democratization and stabilization throughout Latin and Central America. We have been following attentively the development of functional regional integration in North America, and the stronger integration trends in Europe, differences notwithstanding, as well as the rapprochement between the two largest countries in the European and Asian regions: Russia and China. We also welcome the constructive role of Japan in the Pacific area and the Far East.

Within the scope of such global developments, with the major world Powers aiming not at reciprocal destruction but at positive competition and cooperation, Croatia, as a small country, sees its place, first of all, in West European civilization and in its economic and security system in order to have a guarantee for its independence, security and progress. Croatia sees its welfare and stability in the achievement of full membership in European integrative organizations. Croatia is prepared to responsibly assume its share of the burden in the development of the new international order and to constitute a strong link in the integration chain of a new Europe.

In the very short time since it gained independence, Croatia has become a mature and responsible member of the international community. It is already a pillar of future stability and cooperation in that part of southwestern Europe which is linked to the traditionally agitated Balkans. Croatia has in good faith accepted international mediation and United Nations peace-keeping forces in its territory in order to stop the war and reach a political solution that will simultaneously safeguard its territorial integrity and the rights of national minorities within its borders. Croatia has accepted the well-intentioned advice given it concerning the constitutional position of the Serbian ethnic community in line with the highest standards of international conventions on the rights of national minorities, and has incorporated them into its constitutional law.

Croatia has borne the heaviest brunt of the Bosnian crisis and of the human catastrophe wrought by war in that country. Croatia has provided a home or provisional accommodation to hundreds of thousands of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. We sustained this effort even during the Croatian-Muslim conflicts that occurred as a result of Serbian aggression, as the victims of that

aggression sought space for their survival. We have prompted proposals on a mutual agreement on a federation between the Croats and the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and their confederal alliance with Croatia, which eventually resulted in the signing of the Washington Agreements. We have spared no effort to end the senseless war and renew cooperation between the Muslims and the Croats, who, owing to the indecision of the international community, have been brought to the point of a desperate fight for the remnants of Bosnian living space left after the barbarous Serbian aggression.

In circumstances affected by its intricate ethnic and historical heritage, Croatia has shown the highest degree of cooperation in the search for a peaceful political solution to the crisis in the area of the former Yugoslavia, believing, in spite of all of its negative experiences, in the final victory of the principles of international law and in the necessity to normalize relations between the newly emerged States.

However, this readiness to cooperate and this patience have certain limits. Split into two parts by the occupation of one-fourth of its territory, threatened continuously by outlaw terrorism, burdened by the social pressure posed by displaced persons and the war-exhausted economy, Croatia cannot endlessly agree to fruitless compromise, because the continuation of the crisis threatens the existence of the State and the lives of its citizens, and prevents the reconstruction of the economy destroyed by war. We believe that it would also be in the interest of the international community to give Croatia more determined and more consistent assistance so that it can successfully play its constructive part in the solution of the crisis.

Croatia already is, and wants to remain, a mainstay of the new international order and a bridge of cooperation between the newly emerged States on the basis of mutual recognition. The indecision and aimless manoeuvring of the international community in circumstances distinguished by the presence of militancy in certain circles of the parties in conflict threaten to push Croatia into a new military conflict which could be even worse than the previous one in terms of scope, depth and consequences. The international community should not leave Croatia without a choice, in a position where it would be forced to resort on its own to all means necessary to defend its sovereignty, territorial integrity and the right of its citizens - displaced persons - to return to the occupied areas.

We have always been aware that no crisis, particularly one as intricate as this, can be solved without consensus by the international community without a division of responsibility and an agreed approach of the great Powers. Accordingly, we are the first, as with previous peace endeavours, to welcome the efforts of the Contact Group to find an acceptable solution.

Croatia is prepared to continue its high degree of cooperation and partnership with the international community if solutions for Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the occupied Croatian areas are not sought at its expense. Both crises - the one in Croatia and the other in Bosnia and Herzegovina - have the same source: Serbian aggression. Because of this, and in view of the increasingly stronger cooperation between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, a package solution should be sought. Since the sanctions imposed by the international community have forced Belgrade to accept the proposal to end the war and the isolation of the Bosnian Serbs, who oppose it, Belgrade should also be made to desist from supporting the Croatian Serbs, who refuse to agree to the reintegration of occupied Croatian areas and brazenly oppose the implementation of all Security Council resolutions.

In terms of its actual consequences, the 1991 arms embargo was aimed first and foremost at the victims of Serbian aggression. It was accepted at a time when those who formulated global policy mistakenly deceived themselves into thinking that that policy could save Yugoslavia, failing to see that the post-Tito crisis had developed because of the attempt to impose Serbian hegemony over all non-Serbian peoples in that artificial and Communist State formation. Our conditional restraint with regard to the lifting of the embargo is motivated at present exclusively by an endeavour focused on achieving, after all, a peaceful solution over the next few weeks or months. Croatia does not want to be drawn into a new war against its will, but it will be forced to accept it, in cooperation with the other victims of Serbian aggression, if the international community fails to achieve a peaceful solution that would not only put an end to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina but also bring about the reintegration of occupied Croatian areas.

Croatia welcomes Belgrade's announced readiness to isolate the Bosnian Serbs, with their suicidal war option, but expects Belgrade to do the same with regard to the insurgent Serbs in Croatia. Croatia demands that the lifting of sanctions against Serbia (Yugoslavia) be linked also to the cessation of the occupation of Croatian areas, that is, to their reintegration into Croatia's constitutional and legal system. Moreover, the lifting of

sanctions can be considered only after we have seen whether the announced isolation is truly enforced and after this has been verified by credible control mechanisms.

In order to promote positive trends, we also understand up to a point the partial symbolic suspension of sanctions in order to encourage in Serbia those currently expressing their commitment to peace. Nevertheless, Croatia will continue to insist that the lifting of certain sanctions against Belgrade, particularly those related to its being fully released from international economic and all other isolation, be linked to the solution of the problem of the occupied Croatian areas.

Croatia has shown a great deal of patience in its dialogue with insurgent Serbs, but now, after three years of occupation, it demands from the international community a redefinition of the UNPROFOR mandate that will provide for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 769 (1992) and 871 (1993), and force the Croatian Serbs to accept gradual normalization and reintegration pursuant to the adopted peace plan.

We realize that both sides, after any conflict, have to invest much time and effort into restoring and strengthening mutual confidence. We are also quite aware that no long-term stability and progress is possible in Croatia without guaranteed human and ethnic rights to the Serbian and other minority groups. We have indeed guaranteed such rights by a special constitutional law enacted three years ago, but we urge the international community to create conditions for the implementation of this law in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We have also recently taken the decision to speed up the establishment of the human rights tribunal, and are prepared to accept international supervision of compliance with human and ethnic rights. However, the leaders of the Serbian insurgents, and their patrons in Belgrade, should forget their idea of a Greater Serbia and accept the reintegration of occupied Croatian areas on such foundations, to their own benefit and to the benefit of the entire community. We are prepared to accept gradual reintegration through the opening of communications, the return of populations, the reconstruction of destroyed towns and villages, and provisions for social welfare and legal protection. The democratic Government of Croatia is prepared - while urging the resolution of the fundamental political issue: the restoration of the sovereignty of the Croatian State over occupied areas - to genuinely comply with all guarantees related to the rights of the Serbian ethnic community.

In keeping with its peaceful policy, Croatia is also prepared to normalize relations between Belgrade and Zagreb. To this end we shall accept any meeting leading to the recognition of the Republic of Croatia by Belgrade, within its internationally recognized borders, which would make the message to the insurgent Serbs regarding the necessity of gradual reintegration quite unambiguous.

For this reason we have also raised the problem regarding the parts of the Republic of Croatia occupied by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia before the General Assembly, because there is indisputable evidence as to the comprehensive integration - in military, judicial, customs and monetary terms - of occupied Croatian areas into the economic and legal system of Serbia, or the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We would like to thank the vast majority of States in the General Assembly that have already given us their support in this matter. If Belgrade should express its readiness to recognize the Croatian State in the meantime, and to genuinely support reintegration and normalization, we would be pleased to spare the General Assembly the task of dealing with this problem any further.

We would also like to thank the General Assembly for its support for the post-war rebuilding of Croatia, and we expect members' continued understanding in this matter.

In particular, we would like to emphasize that any normalization of relations - diplomatic, political or economic - on equal footing between the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will not affect partnership and cooperation between the Croats and the Muslims in the realization of the Washington Agreements on the Croat-Muslim Federation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its confederation with Croatia.

No peace in the Balkans is possible without the establishment of a balance of forces, nor does the future of any people lie in endless reciprocal military exhaustion or in blocking development throughout the region. We therefore genuinely endorse the normalization of Croat-Serbian relations, but also the implementation of the Washington Agreements, which are in our view not only a tactical manoeuvre by the victims of Serbian aggression but also a development creating the preconditions for ensuring full equality to the Croats as a numerically smaller constituent people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We see in this a pledge of future regional stability and balance of forces. The confederal link between the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and

the Republic of Croatia provides the foundations for sustaining the sound political and economic relations suggested by history, the geographical link and geopolitical realities. By agreeing to a confederal relationship, Croatia is also prepared, with the assistance of primarily Western countries, to assume its share of the responsibility for curbing the smoldering, extreme national and religious trends on all sides, the spread of which could jeopardize stability not only in this part of South-Eastern Europe but also in the greater area.

Croatia also attaches importance to the strengthening and realization of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its confederation with Croatia, the progress of which depends both on mutual relations and on the action taken by the international community in the coming months, for this establishes a political and economic bridge with the Islamic world. Along these lines we have already established close cooperation with Islamic countries fostering identical aspirations, such as Turkey, Jordan and others.

Decisive weeks and months, in which we must struggle for a peaceful resolution to the grave crisis in the area of the former Yugoslavia, lie ahead of us. Not only the parties in conflict, but first and foremost the principal actors of the international community, bear a huge responsibility at this moment. This involves not only the decision on the fate of the United Nations Protection Force mandate in Bosnia and Herzegovina but also whether the Contact Group will succeed in sustaining a united operational basis for a solution or allow the situation to founder into a new military nightmare. The efforts of the international community focused on building a new international order are now being put to the test, more strikingly than anywhere else, on reversing the consequences of the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. We can ultimately resolve this crisis if each of us assumes his share of the responsibility. Hatred must give way to happy children's faces in reconstructed Croatian Vukovar, to the restored splendour of medieval Dubrovnik, to peaceful coexistence in long-suffering and destroyed Sarajevo and Mostar.

In order to achieve this, we must overcome the disastrous war and political crisis by joint efforts and by a well-devised vision of a new international order in this part of the world, in the interest of the entire global order and of the United Nations.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Croatia for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Franjo Tudjman, President of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

Mr. Kingibe (Nigeria): On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Your election is a tribute not only to you personally and to your great country, but to Africa as a whole. As a representative of Côte d'Ivoire, a country with which Nigeria enjoys excellent and brotherly relations, you have our full confidence in your ability to successfully discharge the responsibilities of your high office.

I wish to express our sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Samuel Insanally of Guyana, for the admirable and effective manner in which he conducted the business of the forty-eighth session.

Let me also commend our esteemed Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the purposeful manner in which he has discharged the duties of his office.

My Government heartily welcomes South Africa back to the General Assembly. For decades, the policy of apartheid kept that great country from participating in the work of the Assembly. Happily, apartheid has now been consigned to history. We salute all those who identified with, and contributed to, the long struggle to eradicate apartheid and racism in South Africa. A special tribute must be paid to our brothers and sisters in South Africa who were the direct victims of that evil system and who led the struggle for its eradication.

We commend the vision and statesmanship of President Nelson Mandela for his effective leadership in managing so skilfully the transition of a once-divided society to a united, non-racial, democratic nation. We commend the courage and the untiring efforts of his Government and the entire people of South Africa to heal the wounds of the past and launch their country on the path of economic growth and prosperity on a foundation of justice and equity for all its citizens. We are confident

that the new South Africa will contribute positively to the work of the United Nations.

In the last few years we have witnessed rapid and profound changes on the international scene. Not only have complex challenges arisen, but also new opportunities for the United Nations to redouble its efforts and contributions to the quest for peace and security and to build a world characterized by cooperation and an international community nurtured by a common concern for humanity.

It is a matter of serious concern that the peaceful world expected to be ushered in by the end of the cold war has not materialized. The world continues to face some of the worst forms of conflict and new threats to international peace and security. Violent conflicts arising from resurgent nationalism and religious intolerance between and within States have proliferated. The unresolved situations in Rwanda, Liberia, Somalia, Afghanistan, Cambodia, parts of the former Yugoslavia and parts of the former Soviet Union have caused wanton loss of life and destruction to property and have given rise to humanitarian crises of immense proportions. We must find early and lasting solutions to these conflicts, as they constitute continuing threats to regional stability and to world peace.

Against this backdrop, the United Nations, as the focal point of international cooperation, should seek to redefine its role and establish new structures and mechanisms that can respond effectively to the challenges of crisis management and conflict resolution. The United Nations must retain its primary responsibility for taking the lead in addressing these problems. The Secretary-General's *Agenda for Peace* provides a novel and imaginative framework towards this end.

In the emerging world order Africa must not continue to remain a continent beset with crises and dependent on others for resolution of its internal conflicts. In realization of this, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) established in 1993 a Central Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Management. However, it is evident that the OAU's capacity to effectively mobilize the required financial and logistic resources for this purpose is severely limited. There is, therefore, a necessity for the international community and the United Nations to encourage, through increased financial and logistic support, Africa's efforts at peaceful settlements of disputes through regional and other arrangements, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. We urge the international community to contribute urgently and generously to the Africa Peace Fund, established by the Organization of African Unity.

The capacity of the United Nations to respond promptly and effectively to the demands made on it for peace-keeping operations depends on the willingness of Member States to accept that there is a primary role for the United Nations and that they be ready to contribute the necessary resources to enable it to fulfil such a role. Since our admission 34 years ago, Nigeria has been an active participant in global efforts at peace-keeping, conflict resolution and crisis management. Our experience over the years has convinced us that there is a clear need to re-examine and reorient the peace-keeping efforts of the United Nations. Since initiating in Liberia the Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group (ECOMOG), a subregional peace-keeping force, Nigeria has become Africa's and, indeed, the world's largest troop contributor to international peace-keeping operations. Even though one or two Member States may choose not to recognize its contribution, the records at the disposal of this Organization will clearly show Nigeria's significant contribution to the shared responsibility of global peace-keeping, with its attendant sacrifices, including loss of Nigerian lives.

That is why we are concerned at the incessant harassment, kidnapping and killing of peace-keeping personnel in various theatres of conflict. As an encouragement to other countries to participate in these costly and often dangerous operations, the United Nations must develop a capacity of effective deterrence against such attacks and adopt appropriate measures to provide prompt and adequate compensation for the victims.

One of the disturbing consequences of the proliferation of conflicts is the increasing incidence of refugees and displaced persons. It is our firm conviction that Governments must create structures and suitable conditions which will enable peoples to live in a secure and safe environment in full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Regrettably, Africa has the largest number of refugees and displaced persons in the world. This imposes additional and enormous financial, material and social burdens on the already distressed economies of receiving States. We commend the efforts of the international community in addressing the refugee problems through the provision of humanitarian assistance. We call on all Governments to eradicate the root causes of the existence of refugees and displaced persons and to create the appropriate conditions

for facilitating their voluntary return to their various countries.

Despite the end of the cold war, nuclear weapons continue to pose the greatest threat to international peace and security. Consequently, the need to reduce substantially and ultimately eliminate them must remain our primary goal. Recent reports of a rising trend of trafficking in nuclear materials represent a disturbing new dimension to nuclear proliferation which must be checked as a matter of urgency.

Next year's review and extension conference of the non-proliferation Treaty, which has so far served the international community rather well, must be pursued with vigour. The review and extension of the Treaty must be consistent with objective reality and the basic expectations of Member States.

Questions of peace and security are inextricably linked to issues of development. We therefore welcome the presentation by the Secretary-General of "An Agenda for Development" (A/48/935), which is a fitting complement to his earlier proposals in "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277). In "An Agenda for Development", the Secretary-General has identified five strands: peace as the foundation for development; the economy as the engine of progress; the environment as a basis for sustainability; justice as a pillar of society; and democracy as good governance. Nigeria welcomes these presentations because we believe that the people must be at the centre of all governmental activity, including the goals of development, peace and security.

Global efforts in addressing the crisis of development have, over the years, reflected a dichotomy of perception between the industrialized countries of the North and the developing countries of the South. We must recognize that development, like peace, is indivisible. It is therefore of vital importance that the North and the South should see cooperation in development in terms of mutuality of interest and partnership. The expectation that the end of the cold war would make more resources available for development, especially in developing countries, has regrettably remained unfulfilled. In the circumstances, the international community should initiate bold and imaginative measures to bridge the widening gap between the rich and the poor nations. Affluence in the midst of poverty provides neither peace nor security either to the rich or to the poor.

Africa continues to face grave economic difficultics, at the heart of which is the debt crisis. The perennial problems of declining investment, capital flight and fall in commodity prices remain. The response of the international community has been feeble and rather inadequate. The United Nations Programme of Action for Africa's Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) did not achieve its desired objectives. It does not appear that the New Agenda for Africa's Development in the 1990s will meet with much success either. It is therefore imperative that Africa should be enabled to make a fresh start to address these problems effectively through an imaginative solution to the debt crisis and the diversification of its economies.

For our part, we recognize the need for credible macro-economic policies, as well as for fundamental reforms of our political institutions and processes, and we are taking measures in this regard. However, there is a need to evolve new mechanisms and strategies for international cooperation and partnership.

In the wake of the efforts made in structurally reforming our economy and the democratizion of our political institutions, Nigeria, like many other African countries, has come to grips with certain realities, the ramifications of which are usually misconstrued and need to be fully understood.

Political pluralism, as a facet of democratization, is so deeply ingrained in our national way of life that over the years we have tried to evolve appropriate democratic institutions and values arising from and responding to our specific national experiences, circumstances and aspirations. We remain committed to this process, which is on course, despite its difficulties and challenges.

Too often the process of democratization in Nigeria and, indeed, in several other parts of Africa, has not been correctly presented to the international community. Recent advances in information technology and our lack of resources and capacity for information delivery have hampered our ability to objectively project developments occurring in our societies. For instance, in Nigeria, we continue to make impressive progress in rebuilding sustainable democratic structures and institutions. A Constitutional Conference whose members were largely elected and representing a wide spectrum of our society and diverse interests, has been working assiduously to create an environment conducive to mutual trust, confidence and common purpose among our people. The objective of the Conference is to establish appropriate

modalities, institutions and frameworks for a viable democratic order, by laying down the ground rules for the formation of political parties, and for conducting free and fair elections at all levels of government. The Constitutional Conference will complete its work by November 1994. Following the progress made so far, political activities have already commenced and full-fledged political party activities leading to general elections will commence early in the new year. The resolve and commitment of the Nigerian people and Government to democracy remain firm and unshakeable in the full realization that the task of democratization is primarily our responsibility and is for the good of our people.

The United Nations has no doubt distinguished itself since its inception as an indispensable forum for harmonizing the actions of nations. We are confident that it will continue to serve in the years ahead as a platform for galvanizing and channelling our collective efforts towards lasting peace and justice. This is especially so if we look inwards with a view to revitalizing and strengthening the Organization itself. The Government of Nigeria endorses the view of the Secretary-General in his report "An Agenda for Peace" to the effect that to meet the challenges of a new era, the United Nations must reinforce its capacity to respond as well as to reorient its approach to issues which confront it. We subscribe to his recommendation that Member States provide the necessary political commitment and financial resources to enable the Organization to expand, adapt and reinvigorate its work.

The reforms undertaken by our Organization so far have been essentially piecemeal and incremental. We have made it clear on several occasions that the time was ripe for a fundamental restructuring of the United Nations system. The present composition and the decision-making process of the Security Council do not adequately reflect current realities brought into sharp relief since the end of the cold war. As an instrument for multilateral cooperation, the United Nations must be transparent, efficient and democratic.

The Security Council, as the most important organ of the United Nations, should embody the global quest for democratization in its structure, composition and decision-making processes. In this regard, Nigeria attaches particular importance to the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. It is our expectation that the recommendations that will emerge will make the United Nations more responsive to the needs of the international community. We also expect that the criteria for permanent membership of the Council should include such considerations as population, capacity to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, and a track record assessed over a period of time in international peace-keeping and peacemaking efforts. All permanent members should enjoy the same status and privileges and assume the responsibilities incumbent on membership. No less important is the imperative of equitable geographical representation, which must include permanent membership for Africa in the Security Council. In this connection, it is appropriate that I reconfirm Nigeria's offer to serve the international community as a permanent member of the Security Council.

In this last decade of the twentieth century, two issues have preoccupied the United Nations: the promotion of peace and security and the intensification of international cooperation for development. On both issues, the United Nations has responded to our collective aspirations with varying degrees of success. As we approach the twenty-first century, we must dedicate ourselves anew to the full realization of these core goals and objectives of our Organization so that mankind can enjoy peace, freedom and prosperity.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, His Excellency Mr. Dick Spring.

Mr. Spring (Ireland): I warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. You take office at an historic moment for the United Nations on the eve of its fiftieth anniversary.

The past year has been one of progress and great hope for many peoples and States represented in this Assembly. In South Africa, the elections have given birth to a democratic, non-racial society which offers a model of tolerance and reconciliation for others on that tortured continent. In the Middle East, the establishment of a Palestinian administration in Gaza and Jericho paves the way for a comprehensive settlement in a region that several times in living memory has threatened global confrontation. In Germany and in the Baltic States, the withdrawal of foreign troops marks the end of the division of our continent and heralds a Europe free and at peace. And on my own island - the island of Ireland - the declaration by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) of a complete cessation of military operations has opened

the prospect of a peaceful resolution which has not existed for a generation.

For many years it has been customary for Irish Foreign Ministers to report to this Assembly on developments in relation to the conflict in Northern Ireland. Too often they have spoken of killing and destruction, the failure of political initiatives and controversies on human rights. It seemed that the Northern Ireland conflict belonged to the category of truly intractable problems destined to outlive all change of circumstance and to defy all attempts at a solution.

I begin my address this year on this question, because my message is now one of hope. The past 12 months have significantly enhanced the prospects for lasting peace and stability on the island of Ireland. It is true that the edifice of a solution still remains to be constructed, but I believe very solid foundations have now been laid.

Mr. Abreu (Uruguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

At the origin of the Northern Ireland conflict lies a difference of view as to whether the partition of Ireland earlier this century was or was not a denial of the right of the Irish people to self-determination. This difference was passionately and violently acted out by two communities in Northern Ireland, who were and remain deeply polarized by their division on fundamental constitutional issues. This conflict has been costly for all the people of Northern Ireland and for the British and Irish peoples generally. To deal with it is one of the most urgent and important tasks facing both Governments. Experience has shown that the ability of the two Governments to do so will be directly proportionate to the degree of agreement between us.

It is in the inherited gaps between our positions that terrorism on both sides has taken root. For that reason, cooperation and agreement between the two Governments is vital for any solution. Last December, the Irish and British Governments published a Joint Declaration which significantly consolidated the common ground between us and offered all the parties to the conflict a compelling political alternative to the endless cycle of bloodshed and retribution.

In the Joint Declaration, the British Government recognizes that it is for the people of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively and without external impediment, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland if that is their wish. The Irish Government accepts that the right to self-determination of the people of Ireland as a whole must be achieved and exercised with, and subject to, the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland.

The Declaration seeks to deal with the issue of self-determination in a way which banishes the spectre of coercion. Instead, political consent is now clearly set as the necessary goal and touchstone for any stable arrangement in Ireland, whatever the framework. The Declaration makes clear that the British Government is not the enemy of the Irish nationalist tradition and that the Irish Government is not the enemy of the unionist tradition. A crucial aspect of the Declaration is the acknowledgement that future arrangements in Ireland are for decision and agreement between the Irish people themselves, North and South, and its formal commitment that the role of the British Government will be to promote such agreement.

The Declaration thus marks a decisive break with any notion which has had such dark resonances in Irish history that arrangements in Ireland might be decided as a function of British rights over Ireland. This opens the way, in turn, for a new and more developed acknowledgement by the nationalist tradition of the unquestionable rights of the unionist community, derived from its position as a distinct tradition in Ireland. A considerable section of the Joint Declaration is devoted to this issue.

At the end of August, following a protracted internal debate, the IRA decided in favour of a complete cessation of military operations. That decision has been confirmed by other statements in the interval. Much more important, it has been sustained on the ground. This is a development of very great significance.

It is first and foremost welcome because it saves lives. Secondly, it opens the prospect of comprehensive negotiations, governed by democratic principles, taking place against a background of peace and embracing the entire spectrum of all those involved in the conflict. Such negotiations have the greatest potential for success. Moreover, their outcome is likely to be more authoritative than a less general agreement, which would have had to be enforced against a background of continuing violence and repression.

We still await the end of the campaign of violence carried out by loyalist paramilitaries. I remain hopeful

that they, in turn, will come to realize that their violence is repugnant to their own community as well as to others, and counterproductive to their cause. We hope that responsible political leaders in the unionist community will make their voices strongly heard on this issue, as many have done already, and that a complete cessation of violence will ensue on the loyalist side also.

We have now an unparalleled opportunity to create the basis for lasting agreement among our different political traditions in Ireland. We can do so, no longer prisoners of the past, but rather learning form our past mistakes on all sides.

Perhaps the greatest such mistake, shared at one time as an unquestioned assumption on both sides, was that this conflict, concentrated in the narrow ground of Northern Ireland, could only end in victory and defeat for one tradition or the other. Compromise was seen as the first step on the road to defeat. We have all learned, through a costly process of trial and error, that in the Northern Ireland situation notions of victory and defeat are an illusion. Each community had the critical mass to thwart the other, but neither can prevail alone. General political consent is therefore a simple practical necessity, as well as an ideal.

The challenge now for the British and Irish Governments is to seize on the momentum for peace. Together with all the political parties in Northern Ireland, we need to build new structures, reflecting the lessons of our experience and building on the principles of the Joint Declaration.

Experience has taught us that a majority "winner-takes-all" system is profoundly unsuited to a society such as Northern Ireland, where divisions are predominantly communal and unchanging - rather than social or economic, and therefore changeable. Let us apply that lesson, making agreement and consensus the kernel of all new arrangements.

Northern Ireland is characterized by a profound lack of consensus on the constitutional issue of whether the legitimate frame of reference is Northern Ireland or the island as a whole. Let us anchor new arrangements in an Agreement acknowledging and reconciling the validity of both.

The political division of Ireland has inhibited many of the constructive political, economic and social interactions which can contribute to the welfare of both parts of the island. Let us set that to rights in effective new structures between North and South.

The choice of sovereignty has hitherto been a kind of symbolic shorthand for the victory or defeat of one community or the other. Let us divorce this notion as far as possible from all partisan or tribal connotations, and agree that the exercise of sovereignty, by whichever Government, will at all times, now and in the future, be qualified by scrupulously equal treatment of the two Northern communities and of their rights, identities and allegiances.

New arrangements on these lines would, I believe, divest the conflict over sovereignty of much of its current confrontation and passion. Under new arrangements on these lines, buttressed and guaranteed by formal agreement between the two Governments, conflict over the choice of sovereignty might cease to become the destabilizing issue it now is. Instead, it might be handled under agreed political ground-rules, scrupulously even and fair to both aspirations, as a question of mutual persuasion and comparative benefit. Northern Ireland could become a place specially dedicated to the protection of the rights of both communities. Then, for the first time, both communities there could be truly themselves, and perhaps find common purpose in many areas where at present there is only division.

The Irish Government will pursue progress towards a lasting accommodation on a number of different levels. We are establishing a Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, to enable all democratic parties in Ireland that are so minded to make recommendations on ways in which agreement and trust between the two traditions in Ireland can be promoted and established. This will not be a negotiating forum, although we are hopeful that its work will contribute positively to the climate in which negotiations take place, and that many of its recommendations can be translated into practice.

Simultaneously, the Irish and British Governments are working on a joint framework document setting out their own views on where a balanced accommodation of the problem may be found. It is our hope that this document, which we will commend to the other parties, but cannot of course impose on them, will give fresh impetus to the process of comprehensive negotiation.

The developments I have outlined have forged a unique opportunity to achieve a comprehensive, just and peaceful resolution of the Northern Ireland problem. It

is vital that their potential should be realized through early negotiations and agreement on new political structures. A new beginning for all our relationships in Ireland is within our reach if we have the collective courage and imagination to avail ourselves of the opportunity. The desire for a lasting peace and a political accommodation has never been stronger across the entire population of the island.

If in many parts of the world the message is one of hope, we know that in other places old enmities and ethnic animosities have surfaced, with vicious and indeed deadly consequences.

The conflicts in Somalia, in the former Yugoslavia, in Rwanda; the gross abuses of human rights in Haiti and East Timor; the suffering of millions who are denied their basic rights to food, water or shelter; these remind us that we cannot let up in the struggle to create a peaceful world and to uphold human dignity.

A characteristic feature of many contemporary crises is that they are essentially conflicts within States, rather than between them.

And this, I believe, is the central question facing the United Nations as it approaches its fiftieth anniversary: can the United Nations, which was born out of the greatest inter-State conflict the world has ever seen, and which is designed specifically to prevent and resolve such conflicts - can this Organization deal adequately with internal crises and civil strife?

I know that there are some who argue that the United Nations has no place in such matters, that many internal conflicts are not amenable to outside intervention. I can understand such arguments and the cautious desire not to get involved in other people's internal quarrels.

But can we let a crisis such as that in the former Yugoslavia escalate to the point where it threatens a wider Balkan conflict?

Can we stand aside while millions are slaughtered by their compatriots in Rwanda?

By what calculus do we divine that death in civil strife counts less than death in inter-State warfare, that those threatened by their own countrymen are less deserving of our efforts than those who are threatened by their neighbours?

I can find no moral justification for such distinctions.

The appalling escalation of terror and violence in Rwanda demonstrates the truth of this. To the names that have come to be associated in recent years with human suffering - Sarajevo, Gorazde, Mogadishu, Baidoa - we can now add Goma, Bukavu and Ngara.

The tragedy of Rwanda has gripped the hearts and minds of the Irish people. Today there are over 100 Irish aid workers in the area. More than 70 Irish public servants and military personnel are working with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the aid agencies.

And our President, Mary Robinson, hopes shortly to visit Rwanda to show solidarity with the people of that troubled land and to emphasize the need for international action.

In its response to the crises in Rwanda and Somalia, the international community has shown a generous willingness to help. Much human suffering has been alleviated. But we have not come near to achieving durable solutions. Nor are we any nearer to constructing a system to prevent similar horrors in the future.

We must ask how the United Nations could have played a more active mediating role in Rwanda.

Could it have prevented the outbreak of genocidal warfare when political unrest rapidly deteriorated into civil strife?

Could it have responded more coherently when genocide was followed by a mass exodus?

How can it now assist in the resolution of the conflict?

I believe that unless we equip the United Nations to deal with these kinds of problems - the most characteristic and pressing of our time - the credibility and relevance of our Organization will increasingly be called into question.

The roots of civil disorder and internal strife are often complex and deep - deeper and more complex, indeed, than the causes of inter-State war. Recent experience has shown that recourse to Chapter VII action alone is inadequate and that outside involvement, unless carefully prepared and sensitively executed, can add to, rather than diminish, the crisis. We must learn the lessons of this and realize that building a United Nations

capable of meeting the challenges of the new era will require coordinated action in many areas.

I will mention seven points on which I believe there should be priority action:

We must reform the Security Council to make it more representative of the United Nations greatly expanded membership and to reflect the great changes in international relations of the past 50 years.

We must develop the Organization's capacity for early warning and mediation and for timely intervention in disputes before they escalate out of control.

We must enhance the United Nations peace-keeping capabilities to make them more flexible and responsive when crises erupt.

We must develop the United Nations operational capacity in the area of human rights. In particular, we need a more developed system of human rights monitors.

We must act to establish a permanent international criminal court. We must intensify our efforts to eliminate the root causes of many conflicts - inequality, social injustice, and poverty - by acting on the Secretary-General's agenda for development.

We must restrict the international flow of the instruments of war and oppression by adopting a code of conduct for conventional arms transfers.

There is now widespread agreement on the need for the Security Council to be more representative and more responsive to the needs of the general membership of the United Nations. I believe that early decisions to increase the overall membership of the Council are needed, and that an increase in the permanent membership should reflect the changes in international life over the past 50 years.

Our discussions have shown that concrete decisions will not be easy, but we must avoid getting bogged down in narrow considerations of optimal numbers and the competing claims of regional Powers. One way of handling this would be to build into our decision a commitment to review again the membership of the Security Council at a specific date in the future. In this way we could work for a result that reflects current geopolitical realities, that acknowledges that these realities can change over time and that recognizes that all Member States have the potential to contribute to international peace and security.

Measures already taken to improve transparency are welcome, but more must be done to facilitate interaction between the Security Council and the general membership. And surely the time has also come when we can delete from the Charter references to enemies that no longer exist.

The terrible crises in Rwanda and Somalia have shown that we need to look urgently and more closely at the role and capacity of the United Nations in preventing and defusing conflicts. And we need to consider ways of strengthening the capability of regional organizations to engage in conflict resolution. We must be prepared to avail ourselves in full of the functions bestowed by the Charter on the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the Economic and Social Council, as well as on the Security Council.

We must ensure that information on economic and social conditions likely to result in a threat to security or stability is brought quickly to the attention of the Organization, and in particular to the Security Council. We have the instrument for this in the Economic and Social Council. We should now act on the Secretary-General's proposal that a reformed Economic and Social Council provide reports to the Security Council on those economic and social developments that may threaten peace and security.

Beyond this, we must strengthen the United Nations capacity for mediation. The Security Council and the General Assembly, despite their undoubted authority under the Charter, are not always the most suitable instruments for the direct mediation of conflict. In practice, the Secretary-General has on many occasions appointed a representative to mediate in particular crises, often with considerable success. I believe that the time has come to put these arrangements on a more organized basis. This could be done by constituting a mediation body to which the Security Council or the Assembly could refer difficult issues. Acting in consultation with the Secretary-General, this body would be distinct from the International Court of Justice, in that it would have the role of political mediation rather than that of pronouncing a verdict in terms of international law. I believe that such a body, drawing on the pool of personnel skilled in mediation, backed by effective staff and properly resourced, could rapidly acquire an

expertise and authority that would significantly enhance the peacemaking capabilities of the United Nations.

The United Nations is now conducting more peace-keeping operations and has more personnel in the field than at any time in its history. Ireland is participating in many of these operations and devotes a significant proportion of its defence forces, and of its defence expenditure, to United Nations peace-keeping. That is one reason why my Government is particularly concerned at the under-funding of peace-keeping operations and at the failure of certain Member States to pay their assessed contributions.

But there is a deeper and more important reason. The Secretary-General has pointed to the difficulty in finding personnel for the many new demands on United Nations peace-keeping. Recent experience has shown that a Security Council mandate no longer ensures that an operation will soon take place. I can think of nothing more serious or more damaging than the failure of the Organization quickly to mount an operation at the outbreak of a crisis. The crisis itself escalates out of control, the credibility of the United Nations is called into question and the authority of the Security Council is undermined.

We must act to ensure that operations are properly resourced, that troop contributors can take decisions on participation, secure in the knowledge that they will be adequately funded, and that there is greater consultation between the Council and troop contributions.

The cost of peacekeeping will always be less than the cost of war. There could be no better way to mark the fiftieth anniversary than to address once and for all this most critical constraint on peacekeeping operations.

As our understanding of civil strife develops, we are coming to see the vital role that action in the area of human rights can play in helping to prevent and resolve conflict. The value of integrating peace-keeping and human rights has proved its worth in Cambodia, in El Salvador and elsewhere, but our approach has been piecemeal and tentative. Even in Rwanda we still await an adequate deployment of human rights monitors. Resources will have to be found for this activity. For its part, Ireland intends to contribute to the voluntary fund for Rwanda established by the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

There is a clear need to put in place an effective system of monitoring and adjudicating human rights violations. One important step would be to develop a standing team of human rights monitors reporting to the High Commissioner for Human Rights. This would make it easier to integrate human rights action into peace-keeping operations, and the mandate for peace-keeping operations could include a human rights dimension with clearly established reporting and verification procedures.

In addition, we should move now on the establishment of a permanent international criminal court. The United Nations must demonstrate that it has the will to bring to justice those responsible for crimes against humanity, summary executions, torture, rape and mutilation. If we fail to do this, we will have failed to learn the lessons of Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and we will, of course, risk their repetition.

Our efforts to deal with war and civil strife cannot ignore what the "Agenda for Peace" has described as the root causes of conflict: economic despair, social injustice and political oppression. Maintaining the peace is impossible in an unequal world. Conversely, development is the most secure basis for peace.

It can be no coincidence that Rwanda and Somalia are among the least developed countries of the world. Thus, when the Secretary-General himself tells us that development is in crisis, we are compelled to listen, and we are compelled to agree with him that an alternative to the United Nations in development simply does not exist.

The truth is that the agenda for development and the "Agenda for Peace" are complementary. They are different sides of the same coin, and we must make progress on both if we are to reach our common goals of peace and prosperity.

What has been called a "culture of development" must extend beyond the provision of financial assistance to embrace economic progress, the environment, social justice, democracy and good governance. At next year's World Social Summit and at the Conference on Women we can build on the progress already made in the Conferences on Environment and on Population.

The tragedy of war and civil strife underlines the need to address more seriously the question of disarmament. The easy availability of arms contributes, not just to the scale of the carnage and suffering in conflict, but to the outbreak of conflict itself.

At the global level, the volume of trade in major conventional weapons has declined in recent years. But

in some regions large stockpiles have accumulated. In others the arms trade continues to grow.

There is a need for States to exercise greater responsibility and restraint in their arms transfers. Already the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has led to greater transparency. But I believe that we should now go further. That is why Ireland has proposed that the United Nations elaborate a code of conduct for conventional arms transfers which would set out common principles to be observed in this area. It is my hope that the General Assembly will now decide that work on such a code should be put in hand.

The lives of millions of people have been put at risk and large areas rendered unsafe as a result of the indiscriminate use of land-mines. Since last year many Governments have introduced moratoriums on the export of anti-personnel mines. I welcome President Clinton's call for an agreement to reduce the number and availability of these mines.

I welcome also the very considerable progress made in the reduction of nuclear arsenals and towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The threat of nuclear conflict between the major Powers no longer overshadows our daily lives. But there is disturbing evidence that some States still want to acquire a nuclear-weapon capability. Their ability to do so is helped by the growth in the world's stocks of fissile materials and in personnel with the requisite technological skills.

Next year's Conference to review and extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons provides an opportunity to address these issues. Ireland wants to see an indefinite extension of the Treaty. We want to see the principles on which the Treaty is founded maintained; the non-proliferation regime strengthened; all States becoming members; and progress made towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, as envisaged in the Treaty.

The agenda for United Nations reform is formidable - for the Organization itself and for the States that make up this Assembly. But whatever the difficulties, reform is a vital and urgent necessity. I am convinced that unless we act in a broad and imaginative way, bringing together the political, peace-keeping, development and human-rights instruments of the United Nations, we will prove inadequate to the great contemporary challenges.

We now have an opportunity such as has not existed for a generation. I urge all of us to grasp it.

The President (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, His Excellency Mr. Eduard Kukan.

Mr. Kukan (Slovakia): I should like to congratulate Mr. Essy of Côte d'Ivoire on his election to the post of President of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its forty-ninth session. I wish him much success in this highly responsible mission.

At the same time, I should like to thank Mr. Essy's predecessor as President, His Excellency Ambassador Insanally, for his great personal contribution to the success of the last session of the General Assembly.

I also avail myself of this opportunity to express deep appreciation of all the work and effort of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, as the head of the United Nations.

Allow me to open my statement with a personal remark. During the past few years we have witnessed dynamic changes in world politics. The dynamism of development in international life is reflected in my personal life. In the course of the past four years I have represented two States as their Ambassador to the United Nations. Today I am honoured and proud to represent one of them - my native country, Slovakia - as its Minister of Foreign Affairs. The fact that the Permanent Representative to the United Nations was nominated as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of his country is yet another manifestation of the respect that the United Nations enjoys in Slovakia.

The fact that my country, less than two years after its admission to membership of the United Nations, became a full-fledged component of the community of nations is confirmation of the credibility of our foreign policy, which is based on respect for international law and for principles of democratic coexistence among nations. It is also a result of the implementation of our foreign-policy principles, which originate from the hierarchy of values of Slovak society. These values are characterized by respect for democracy, human rights and a free-market economy.

It is evident that Slovakia, as a small country in the geopolitically sensitive central European region, must have a transparent and clearly defined orientation in its

foreign policy. We therefore aim our activities at European integrationist trends and strive to join the stable, democratic and prosperous countries. Joining the European Union and participating actively in the elaboration of an efficient model of European security are among the main priorities of Slovak foreign policy.

Our international contacts are, of course, much wider and are of a more multilateral character. We are interested in the best possible relations with neighbouring countries. I am glad to state that we have recently managed to fulfil this aim successfully. We believe that subregional arrangements, such as Visegrad 4 or the central European initiative, also help to strengthen the stability of the whole region. Close contacts with western European countries - and these are being strengthened in respect of economic, political and security matters - also contribute to the fulfilment of this objective.

At the global level, the priority of the Slovak Republic, which is part of the European region, is the maintenance of solid transatlantic relations through the development of intensive cooperation with the United States of America and Canada, both bilaterally and multilaterally. Further, we consider the development of cooperation with our eastern neighbours - Ukraine, the Russian Federation and other countries - as being especially important. Regardless of the fact that Slovakia is a small central European country, we strive to maintain and further develop good relations and cooperation with the countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific region.

Our tasks and goals are very demanding, and their fulfilment depends on sufficient support from the public and on the consensus of the major political parties. I am glad to state that in Slovakia there is wide public and political agreement on the principal issues of our foreign policy. This is a positive signal for foreign countries, which can count on Slovakia as a reliable partner.

As I indicated at the beginning of my statement, today's world is defined by dynamic changes that are due to the growing multipolarity of international relations. Many important events that occurred in the last year advanced the international community towards achievement of the goals of the United Nations - to guarantee the peaceful coexistence of nations - but there have also been events that cannot fill us with optimism.

One positive event has been the peace process in the Middle East. Slovakia has supported this process from the very beginning with the aim of reaching a comprehensive and final peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The conclusion of agreements between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on the provision of limited autonomy in the zone of the Gaza Strip and Jericho, and the Jordan-Israeli declaration on terminating the state of war, as well as on measures to settle mutual relations, justified once more the peace efforts of the parties involved, as well as those of the international community, which is convinced that peace can be restored in this region.

We also welcome the democratization of South African society demonstrated by the elections in April of this year. Though South Africa is far from Slovakia, we put special emphasis on the continuation of this development. The visit of the President of the Slovak Republic to South Africa for the inauguration of President Mandela is evidence of this.

On the other hand, even these positive examples will not help us in successfully ending conflicts in other parts of the world. We are deeply concerned over the continuing conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina that is taking place some 300 kilometres from our borders. Slovakia is among the countries that yearn for an end to the continuing tragedy in that country. We wish to underline the superiority of a political solution to a military one, which by definition cannot eliminate the antagonism between the opposing sides.

The Slovak Republic, as a user of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, is a State without nuclear weapons. We therefore support a speedy signing of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. We wish to emphasize that such a treaty should apply to all tests without exception and for an indefinite period, including tests for peaceful purposes. Sustaining the moratorium on nuclear tests by all members of the nuclear club is considered by Slovakia to be the main precondition for concluding such a treaty, and at the same time, it is a clear sign of the real intentions of the nuclear club members.

We consider next year's Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to be closely linked to the nuclear-test ban. The NPT has been playing an important role in the history of humanity, and has managed to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We support unequivocally the unconditional and indefinite extension of the NPT.

The Slovak Republic appreciates the steps undertaken at the United Nations in the sphere of

transparency in armaments, whether conventional or chemical and biological. We welcome the first positive universal step regarding conventional weapons: the establishment of the Register of Conventional Arms.

The verification level of the existing multilateral treaties is in most cases either inadequate or incomplete. Many of the multilateral treaties on arms control do not contain verification clauses - and if they do contain such clauses, they do not make full use of verification, as in the case of the NPT. I believe that the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction will be a test case for a new type of multilateral treaty on disarmament. The ratification of this agreement is among the top priorities in the agenda of our Parliament.

I can assure the Assembly that Slovakia is fulfilling responsibly and in a timely manner the obligations concerning confidence building, security, control of armaments and disarmament that have been undertaken at universal and regional negotiating forums. We firmly support all disarmament activities; hence we are well aware of the important role of the Conference on Disarmament in this field. I would like to confirm the permanent interest of the Slovak Republic in resolving the issue of its membership in the Conference, since the former Czechoslovak federation was a founding member of the Conference. It is truly a paradox that a country in which arms production decreased to 9 per cent of its 1989 level is not yet a member of the Conference.

We are aware of the need to improve existing organizational structures and strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. The CSCE continues to adapt to the new realities. Slovakia, however, is of the opinion that the basic character of the CSCE should not change. It should remain a wide political forum and its basic principle - the adoption of decisions by consensus - should be maintained.

Peace-keeping operations are currently at a level that is perhaps the highest that the international community can provide and sustain. They drain our financial resources, while not even sparing human lives. The original enthusiasm for peace-keeping operations has gradually cooled down with the knowledge that there are many obstacles that the United Nations cannot overcome. The tragic situation in Rwanda, where even the presence of United Nations forces could not avert a civil war and massacres, is a clear example. The United Nations peace-keeping operation on the territory of the former Yugoslavia has also encountered serious problems. The Slovak Republic has a contingent of 600 soldiers in the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) - members of the engineering unit who among their military tasks provide highly specialized expert work and assistance in restoring that country, which has suffered so much tribulation. Along with their efforts in the maintenance of peace, they have undertaken the dangerous task of removing mines from the country.

Slovakia strongly supports President Clinton's appeal in his statement before the General Assembly on Monday for the conclusion of an agreement that would reduce the number and availability of anti-personnel land-mines. I would like to mention that Slovakia, in accordance with resolution 48/75 K, has already implemented, on 17 April 1994, a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines for an indefinite period.

In connection with United Nations efforts to resolve several problems that have arisen in the field of peace-keeping operations, the Slovak Republic welcomes the decision to establish stand-by forces that can be dispatched on short notice and under the command of the United Nations. We have declared our interest in contributing to these units with engineers of the Slovak Army. Such units need highly specialized and thorough preparation and training designed for specific purposes. My country is in the process of building such a training centre and has already used it to train more than 1,200 members of United Nations peace-keeping forces since May of this year.

Experience has shown that the traditional type of peace-keeping operation is no longer sufficient. If a peace-keeping operation is to succeed it should contain a humanitarian element. Slovakia is of the opinion that in any operation under United Nations auspices and with United Nations coordination it is necessary to respect the principle of the priority of United Nations command.

In connection with the increased number of attacks against United Nations personnel, the Slovak Republic appreciates the Assembly's decision at its forty-eighth session to elaborate an international convention dealing with the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel. The next step the United Nations should consider is providing proper armament and other *matériel* for members of peace-keeping missions so that

they might be able to react more appropriately to changing conditions and if necessary be able to defend themselves.

The Slovak Republic respects human rights and welcomes all international initiatives which could bring results in this sphere. We highly appreciate the commencement of the activities of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We believe that this post will be an active United Nations instrument to guarantee the protection of human rights, especially where they are most flagrantly violated. At the beginning of 1994 we opened the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights in Bratislava. In this connection, I wish to express our gratitude to the Netherlands for its assistance in establishing this institution.

The gravity of the problem of refugees continues to increase. I express the hope that the United Nations will not underestimate this problem and that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will no longer have to fight financial problems in future.

The Slovak Republic supports the reform of the United Nations. It considers the revitalization and restructuring of the Security Council to be one of the crucial issues. We hope that the solution adopted will increase the efficiency of the Security Council and will contribute to the overall strengthening of the United Nations. We are of the opinion that new permanent members of the Security Council must have a global responsibility and be able to meet the ensuing financial obligations.

When the mandate of the Security Council is fulfilled and sanctions are implemented, more attention should be paid to possible adverse impacts on third countries. We are convinced that effective mechanisms of assistance to affected third countries should be seriously considered and established as soon as possible.

Slovakia encounters many problems connected with the transformation of society. It is crucial to solve the economic and social issues of a transition process unprecedented in scale and method. The United Nations, with its organs and specialized agencies, has an irreplaceable role in assisting their solution.

I should now like to give some facts on the economic situation of the Slovak Republic. Now that the first, basic steps of transformation have been taken, the main goal of the Slovak economy is to create permanent macroeconomic stability and conditions for substantial economic growth in the years to come. My country, with 5.3 million inhabitants and with exports about 50 per cent of gross domestic product, can be considered a small, open economy. The Slovak Government is concentrating on speeding up those reforms which should result in the quick transformation of ownership relations. Considerable progress has been made in macroeconomic stabilization in the first six months of 1994. Real gross domestic product has increased by 4.4 per cent. The State budget deficit represents only 3.8 per cent of gross domestic product, and is considered a positive indicator. Thanks to cooperation with, and assistance from, the International Monetary Fund, the foreign currency reserves of the Central Bank have increased. These data are considered to be the first sign of economic revival.

Economic cooperation and, within its framework, international assistance are prerequisites for further development of economies in transition. United Nations organs and specialized agencies cooperate intensively with my Government. Thanks to this cooperation, the economic situation is substantially better than had been anticipated, and the Slovak Republic has become an accepted international partner in economic cooperation.

The Slovak Republic welcomes the increased attention by, and efforts of, the United Nations aimed at bringing the issues of development and economic cooperation to the foreground. We hope that the agenda for development will initiate concrete steps in this sphere. We particularly appreciate the efforts of the United Nations in helping to resolve problems and difficulties encountered by the countries transforming their economies, and we are of the opinion that within the United Nations framework there are more opportunities to facilitate and speed up the integration of these economies into the world economy.

In the past decade the number of least developed countries has increased horrendously. This results in an urgent appeal to all mankind, but especially the industrially developed countries. However, at the same time we cannot avoid the primary responsibility of the least developed countries for their own destiny. The Slovak Republic offers assistance, within its own means and possibilities, especially through the participation of Slovak experts in development programmes - for example, in education and health care. Slovakia is prepared to engage in organizational work for the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, 1996.

I should also like to emphasize the importance of the recently concluded International Conference on

Population and Development, held in Cairo. The fact that it succeeded in reaching an agreement and adopting the Final Document is a signal that the international community is aware of its responsibility for global issues of humanity, and that international conferences and discussions are the only right battlefield for the solution of problems, no matter how sensitive and complicated they may be.

As can be seen from the facts I have set out, Slovakia, as one of the youngest Members of the United Nations, wishes not only to "take", but also intends to be actively involved in United Nations programmes, and has the capabilities. My country has much to offer developing countries. Slovak experts, with their know-how and experience, are prepared actively to participate in United Nations development programmes. Slovak products and technologies tested under demanding conditions could contribute to the efficiency of these development programmes. In the sphere of the development of human resources, Slovakia, with a long tradition in this field, offers a variety of courses at universities.

My country has a difficult task to carry out: transformation of the economy. The United Nations also has a difficult task; that of adapting itself to the new realities and adjusting its structure and activities accordingly. I wish to assure the Assembly that the Slovak Republic is prepared to do its utmost to carry out the first task and to participate actively in the activities of the United Nations.

I wish to conclude my statement by wishing much success to this year's session of the General Assembly.

The President *(interpretation from Spanish):* I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, His Excellency Mr. Jüri Luik.

Mr. Lüik (Estonia): I should like to congratulate Mr. Essy on his election as President of this, the forty-ninth, session of the General Assembly. The Estonian people wish him all the best in this post.

Today is a day of national mourning in my country. Late last night, amid stormy autumn winds, the passenger and car ferry *Estonia*, sailing from Tallinn to Stockholm, sank at high sea. Nearly 100 people have been saved, and rescue efforts are continuing. But most of the over 850 people who were aboard the *Estonia* are presumed to be dead. I should like to thank the President and all those who have expressed their sorrow and sent condolences.

In this painful loss, we can draw some solace from the global teamwork we have seen in the rescue efforts. Last night demonstrated beyond a doubt that the Baltic Sea is a sea of cooperation. Swedish, Finnish, Danish and Estonian rescue units worked together, and we had offers of help from Russia, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and countless others. On behalf of my Government, I thank all of those who helped us with the rescue effort. The spirit of international cooperation sets a fine example for all of us here today.

Today my country comes before this forum for the first time in half a century unfettered by the problem of the presence of foreign troops on our soil. The role the United Nations played in helping to remove the last vestiges of the Second World War was not small. It is therefore a special privilege for me to speak here today.

It is also not insignificant that this new era in the history of Estonia, Latvia and Germany coincides with the upcoming fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. These two events would seem to call for solemn reflection on the past or at least a joyous celebration of the moment. But most of all, this new era requires new approaches. Post-war security - be the war hot or cold - still hangs in a delicate balance. Because it is up to all of us, collectively, to decide which way the scales tip, I wish to focus on the future, on how we in Estonia are approaching this new era, and on some of the ideas enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations that we believe deserve special attention in the next few years.

On 31 August, we marked the withdrawal of troops. The celebrations and commemorations of this event symbolized the end of one era and the beginning of another. The withdrawal of the troops has had a tremendous effect in bringing us closer to normalization of relations with the Russian Federation, and we sincerely hope that the problem of officers who were demobilized on our territory against the spirit and the letter of the troop-withdrawal treaty will be solved. The troop withdrawal was also a major step towards achieving security in the Baltic region. But the problem of Baltic security has not yet been solved - far from it.

One dimension of moving towards bona fide security undoubtedly lies in trying to improve relations with the Russian Federation. The potential for good will is in the air, and it is our duty, on both sides of the 1920 Tartu Peace Treaty, to seize the moment and make that peace again. We might call this policy towards Russia one of

positive engagement. This would involve, among other qualities, mutual respect for sovereignty, mutual respect for national security interests, mutual refraining from verbal and other confrontation, and mutual respect for international norms of behaviour, particularly in the area of human rights.

We are willing to expend considerable energy to repair a relationship that has been historically so complex. To do so is not only in our own interest and in that of Russia, but in the interest of regional, European and therefore global security as well. I would emphasize, however, that in order for this policy to be successful, it must be mutual. If, on the other hand, our efforts are not reciprocated, then we must be prepared to expend our energy in different ways.

Lately, we have noted with great concern talk of creating new spheres of influence. We hear continuing use of the phrase "the near abroad". We observe similar attitudes in discussions about the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union. We are already well past the initial stages of building a European security structure. A viable framework, based on shared values, that includes Central and East European States is nearly in place. It is not only late but unacceptable to ponder the plans of architects who speak of spheres of influence and to consult contractors who wish to build on sand or, worse, on a slippery slope.

There are some specific ways in which the United Nations can take advantage of the historic opportunity it faces to encourage principled behaviour. One of them is to render peace-keeping more effective by strengthening peace-keeping mechanisms, including the dissemination of better and more timely information to all Member States in order to garner the support necessary for any collective action. Rather than abdicating responsibility, whether due to benign neglect, expediency or funding problems, and allowing large States to act unilaterally, it means holding all States in all regions to the same standards. It goes without saying that in lending its name to any peacekeeping operations, the United Nations must stand by the fundamental principles of neutrality and multilateralism. The United Nations should never become a mask behind which one country tries to assert dominance over another by means of peace-keeping.

Let me add that Estonia is actively developing its own peace-keeping force, to be put, perhaps next year, at the disposal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Another area in which more effective mechanisms and more stringent standards are needed is that of human rights, as reflected in the Vienna Declaration and plan of action of last year. I would stress the importance of the newly established Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights taking on this task. We wish High Commissioner Ayala Lasso success in this most important and challenging endeavour.

We believe the High Commissioner can be instrumental not only in improving the effectiveness of the United Nations human rights mechanisms, but also in holding this body to strict standards. We believe that all States should be measured according to the same human rights standards. I could not agree more with the observation made by Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin two days ago in this forum that

> "neither a selective approach nor double standards are permissible." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 5th meeting, p. 2)*

Indeed, exceptions cannot be made on the basis of the size of a nation, its cultural heritage or the political delicacy of the situation. The standards that are applied to one country must be valid for all others - in other words, there should be no elastic rulers.

In this regard, allow me to remind the Assembly of an open letter - an appeal, really, to morality in foreign policy - which was signed by a host of political luminaries and published in September of last year in *The Wall Street Journal*. I quote from the letter, entitled "What the West Must Do In Bosnia":

> "Even if, like Kuwait in August 1990, all Bosnia (and not just Sarajevo) were seized, it would be essential for the democracies to make clear, as they did in the case of Kuwait, that violent border changes and ethnic cleansing will not stand. If the West does not make that clear, it will have nothing persuasive to say ...".

Sadly, the message in that letter remains applicable today. If the world's democracies, led by the United Nations, do not speak out for morality in the area of human rights, we will lose our ability to influence the course of events. Democracies must be willing to stand by the principles upon which our States and societies are based. It is our sincere hope that non-selective

application of human rights standards will become the rule, not the exception.

A third way the United Nations can take advantage of this moment is to consider the global changes that have taken place since 1945. Then, in the immediate post-war period, the composition of the Security Council was established by drawing a sharp distinction between the victors and the vanquished. Times have changed. We must now take into account the positive role that some States in particular play in the international arena. And I have in mind here Germany and Japan, States that have more than demonstrated their commitment to democracy during the last 50 years. Estonia strongly supports granting Germany and Japan permanent-member status in the Security Council as a recognition of their accomplishments and an acknowledgement of their stabilizing role in world affairs.

I would turn now briefly to Estonia's vision of its future role in the United Nations. Now that the issues which had hitherto demanded our intense attention have been more or less solved, we are freer to devote more energy to wider issues that affect all of us. I am speaking here of global phenomena such as terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking and smuggling of radioactive materials as well as health and social issues and environmental problems. These are issues that know no borders, and dealing with them requires a collective effort on our part.

On this, the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we face an enormous challenge. The war - I mean the Second World War - is finally over. But the real battle - to safeguard human and civil rights for all persons, to strengthen security for all States, to preserve a continent undivided - this battle has only just begun. With intelligence, perseverance, goodwill, and a little luck, the nations gathered here can unite in the battle to make the next 50 years more constructive than the last.

Mr. Araníbar Quiroga (Bolivia) *(interpretation from Spanish):* I am honoured to convey the greetings of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada and of the people of Bolivia to the Heads of State and Government in attendance at this the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly; to the Foreign Ministers; to the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Amara Essy, and to his predecessor, Ambassador Samuel Insanally, as well as to our dear friend Vice-President Sergio Abreu; to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali; and to the whole of the international community, so worthily represented here.

As the highest forum of the peoples of the Earth, this noble Assembly constitutes the ideal setting to reflect on and debate the issues of our day.

Bolivia is striving to enter the twenty-first century while bringing about substantial changes based on the principles of the United Nations Charter.

During its first year in office, the Government of President Sánchez de Lozada devoted its efforts to carrying through the reforms needed to make the State an effective instrument for our society's democratic development, centred on the well-being of our people. Thus, our reforms have been based on the concept of comprehensive development, combining human and economic development, social equity, and sustainable development.

Now that Bolivia has thus completed the reform of its political constitution, it is putting into effect changes that will enable it to consolidate democracy and economic development, in conditions of fairness and social justice.

My country has embarked on a dynamic policy of participation by the people, a process of educational reform, and a recasting of the shareholding and productive structures of public enterprises through an innovative concept of capitalization.

During the second phase of its programme, the Bolivian Government is planning to implement new legal provisions to increase investment and production in order to provide more and better job opportunities, and to find concrete solutions to the problems of poverty and the marginalization of broad sectors of society. It is in this connection, in the context of our Government's policy, that the participation of the people is of particular significance.

On the subject of sustainable development, my country has proposed the holding of a meeting of Presidents of the hemisphere; that meeting is now scheduled for 1996 in Bolivia.

The future of our peoples and their material and spiritual well-being can only be the work of their own hands, as they are both the subjects and the objects of development. It is therefore most encouraging that - not only within our country but within the United Nations system as well - there is a conviction that a central role falls to organized participation, both individual and

collective, as an essential factor for change in a creative and positive direction.

Mechanisms for popular participation will make it possible to imbue the liberty, independence, sovereignty and progress of nations with vitality and social content. It is a matter of appraising the role of all social sectors: workers and entrepreneurs, women, indigenous and rural communities, the marginalized, the young, the elderly, the disabled and all those who have the right and duty to contribute to building a better future.

It is with that conviction that the Bolivian Government has contributed actively to the preparatory work for the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen in 1995, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing the same year.

In that same spirit, the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People will be inaugurated at this session of the General Assembly. My country is confident that the observance of this Decade will be not merely symbolic, but essentially a practical and concrete endeavour in its objectives and its scope. To that end, the meeting of representatives of Latin American and Caribbean Governments, grass-roots peasant organizations and international agencies, held in the Bolivian city of Cochabamba last June, framed a series of recommendations to be included in the strategy of the Decade. Those recommendations have also been brought to the attention of Governments and the United Nations system. We hope to receive a prompt and positive response so that the legitimate claims of indigenous peoples will not be lost in the labyrinths of international bureaucracy or the oblivion of another 500 years of solitude.

Resolving age-old problems surely calls for a great capacity to understand the values, customs and ways of life of other cultures. Bolivia hopes that the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People will provide an opportunity for the international community to fully understand the topic of the coca leaf, a form of vegetation traditionally grown in Andean regions. The cultural and medicinal uses of the coca leaf need to be re-evaluated in order to distinguish it clearly from the social problems brought about by the abuse of one of its derivatives in the developed countries, which creates a growing demand associated with an international cycle of crime.

Let me take this opportunity to declare formally, once again, that the Government and the people of Bolivia are earnestly and firmly committed to international efforts to find the best-suited mechanisms to guarantee the success of the policies delineated within the framework of the changes recommended in General Assembly resolution 48/12, adopted at the last session.

Less than two weeks ago, on an initiative of President Sánchez de Lozada, the most representative organizations of Bolivian society, together with the armed forces and the police, took a historic step when they debated the problems of the coca leaf in a framework of pluralistic participation and cooperation. The main conclusions of that meeting, which I take the liberty of summarizing to this great forum of nations, stressed the urgency of combating drug trafficking through a world-wide strategy of shared responsibility; the need to adopt as a primary goal the fight against the dire poverty affecting over two-thirds of Bolivia's population; and support for initiatives aimed at the comprehensive development of coca-producing areas.

Bolivia is grateful for the international community's willingness to draw a perfectly clear distinction between the positive aspects of the native coca leaf and the grave harm done by dint of the external demand for cocaine. We trust that this positive attitude will make it possible in the near future to address this problem without prejudice.

But the international agenda at the end of the century encompasses other equally complex issues that have recently been brought to light by the end of the cold war, although their roots can be traced back to centuries of accumulated injustice.

The Republic of South Africa has given the world invaluable lessons in its struggle against apartheid and for democracy. My country is joyful at the outcome of that process and, on behalf of Bolivia, I welcome President Nelson Mandela to the General Assembly.

Deeply moved as well by news of the tragedies in Rwanda and in other regions of the world, Bolivia expresses its solidarity with peoples which, through violence and catastrophe, are showing us what we sow when problems are not resolved in timely fashion, problems such as hunger, poverty, mass migration, the various forms of injustice inherited from colonial times and the plundering and lawless acts carried out even today by Powers large and small against other States.

Bolivia welcomes the advances achieved through dialogue in the Middle East, and we trust that in the

future dialogue will become the principal instrument in dealing successfully with international disputes and conflicts. The Bolivian people hopes for a just and lasting peace between Israel, Palestine and the Arab peoples. May the deliberations of the General Assembly contribute to consolidating that process.

The situations in the former Yugoslavia and in other areas are a direct consequence of actions in the service of misguided geopolitical interests aimed at social and political destabilization of foreign territories, We hope that the senseless repetition of such practices, which have had such woeful effects in Central Europe, Asia and Africa, will not lead to similar disasters in other regions. Furthermore, the Government and the people of Bolivia condemn policies of "ethnic cleansing" in the strongest terms and call upon the international community to take resolute and clear measures to put an end to those actions and to punish those responsible for them.

Latin America stands unconditionally in support of democracy and against the illegal use of military means and force, in accordance with the recent declaration of the presidential summit of the Rio Group, the resolutions of the Organization of American States and of the United Nations and the numerous proclamations of Parliaments and popular organizations from all over the continent.

Democracy, of course, cannot be left undefended. Bolivia has had the bitter experience of long dictatorial interruptions in its institutional life. Consequently, Bolivia stands today with the people of Haiti and its legitimate Government, and it supports the immediate return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the restoration of the democratic regime.

History has shown that peace, justice and respect for the principle of self-determination can be guaranteed only when there are consolidated democratic institutions capable of defending and promoting human rights. Solidarity cannot be left at the rostrum. My country reiterates its willingness to help, within its available means, in the process of restoring Haitian democracy to the extent the legitimate Government of that country deems our help useful.

The ending of the cold war must apply also to Latin America and make it possible, through dialogue and understanding among the parties concerned, for Cuba to be reintegrated into the inter-American community.

All States of the world must contribute to ensuring peace, brotherhood and the timely solution of problems that are as yet unresolved. To that end, action must be taken to enable peoples to develop, since economic backwardness and its social effects are at the root of the crises and conflicts we face.

We therefore attach high priority to the themes of the "Agenda for Development". Economic complementarity, the transfer of technology, trade, the opening up of economies, foreign investment and co-operation should be our instruments for strengthening solidarity and friendship among peoples and Governments.

In this spirit, Bolivia strongly supports Latin American unity and subregional integration, hemispheric agreements, and any opportunity that may present itself for exchanges between nations.

These aims - cooperation and complementarity, friendship and solidarity - must serve as the basis of the new international order. For that reason, the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Charter in San Francisco should provide an opportunity to make substantive progress in adapting the United Nations to the new realities and demands of the world community.

Governments on all continents must demonstrate the ability to save future generations from the scourge of war. We must make human rights, individual and collective, fully effective. International justice must become possible and be assured, and social progress within the broadest concept of freedom must be promoted.

In international relations in the third millennium, law must cease to be the instrument of the stronger, serving to entrench injustices, and must become the sole and effective means of resolving disputes, rectifying the errors and excesses of past generations as often as may be necessary.

On the subject of respect for the rules of inter-State relations, Bolivia welcomes the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and welcomes the fact that 1998 is to be the International Year of the Oceans. Convinced that recovering our country's access to the sea is an inalienable right of Bolivia, the Government of President Sánchez de Lozada is working to secure for the Bolivian people, during the current decade, a real solution to the unjust land-locked

situation with which it has had to contend for over 100 years. My country believes in the force of convictions, in the force of international solidarity, in the force and the evolution of law, and in the possibilities of friendly negotiation with a view to overcoming disputes.

Democracy must find clear expression in inter-State relations. Participation by countries large and small in the resolution of issues that affect all of them must be equitable and not, as is sometimes the case, mere words.

This presupposes, among other things, a change in the organization and composition of the Security Council so that with its permanent and non-permanent members, it will be representative of the realities and requirements of appropriate participation, reflecting the obvious emergence of new centres of power in different parts of the world. It will also be necessary to strengthen the role of the General Assembly and to restore the United Nations its central role in the resolution of the major economic problems of the planet, a task which, for the present, remains the exclusive preserve of the super-Powers.

The right to development is an objective necessity, although exercise of the right still seems remote for the vast majority of the world's population. We must assume an effective commitment to give that right the same priority treatment as is given to the human rights of individuals.

If the present generation is unable to defeat growing poverty and secure employment opportunities for the already vast global army of the indigent, it will be impossible to ensure the peace and well-being in the developed regions of the world. Population growth, mass migrations and globalization will take their toll, with a negative effect on the dignity, the peaceful co-existence, and the hopes of all mankind for a better life.

Over the centuries, the Andean peoples of Bolivia have wisely been guided by three fundamental rules which, in the Quechua language, are: "AMA SUA, AMA LLULLA, AMA KHELLA", meaning "Do not steal, do not be idle, do not lie".

If those three rules were also applied in relations between States and nations today, they would have to be: "Do not unjustly exploit the fruits of your neighbours' work. Do not complacently enjoy your splendid life-style amid universal poverty. Do not make promises of solidarity and understanding that you are not prepared to keep."

I feel sure that the ability of all of us to live together would be infinitely enhanced were we to be guided by such rules.

The President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, His Excellency Mr. Stevo Crvenkovski.

Mr. Crvenkovski (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): Allow me at the outset, Mr. President, to congratulate Mr. Essy on his election and to wish all participants in this Assembly success in their work. My appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General for his able leadership of our Organization.

At this year's session the General Assembly will deal with numerous issues of vital importance for the whole of humanity. In the desire continuously to enhance the role of the United Nations as a universal organization of irreplaceable character, every Member State must make its utmost contribution to the establishment of a better and more prosperous world and to improving relations between the peoples on this planet, in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. In that spirit, my country, the Republic of Macedonia, is prepared, with all of its modest forces, to contribute to achieving these aims, which are of universal interest, and to improving the functioning and the role of this Organization. I would like to assure the Assembly that our delegation will make its full contribution to that end.

The President returned to the Chair.

In the Republic of Macedonia, hopes run high that the work of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly will result in the adoption of the "agenda for development - and we deem development the most important issue facing humanity on the threshold of the new millennium. We are convinced that the work of this session will also have a positive effect in overcoming acute crises and conflicts in the world. In short, we are prepared to make our full contribution to the strengthening of the role and the importance of the United Nations for peace and security in the world, economic progress and the prosperity of humanity.

The last decade of this century has shown very acutely the problem of economic and social development in the world. On the one hand, there are the hopes of humanity, rightly directed towards the world of highly developed countries as a guarantor of economic progress,

social safety, human dignity and a healthy environment. On the other hand, underdeveloped countries are facing the elementary issues of survival and escape from poverty, economic despair and insecurity.

The countries in transition, including my own, are going through a painful period of trying to find their own place in the world of market economies and democracy and are additionally burdened by their own devastated economies, social problems and threats of new, regressive and undemocratic situations.

This controversial picture of the world shows the full complexity of international economic and social development and thus raises the question of a possible way out of such a situation. I am quite certain that the majority of the world sees the solution neither in various new ideological concepts nor in new regional and political divisions along such lines - and even less in ideas leading to a division of responsibilities and rights among countries based on false altruism and utopian blueprints.

A solution is possible only if we acknowledge the interdependence of economic and social development. This is a fact to which no nation today can remain indifferent, regardless of its size and level of development. It is more than obvious that the economic problems of the undeveloped world constitute a serious threat to the developed countries. Furthermore, it is more than clear that a solution to the problem of underdevelopment cannot be sought in the form of social assistance or gifts. On the contrary, the very essence of global economic and social interdependence teaches us that by helping the undeveloped countries solve their problems developed countries are in fact helping themselves. Thus, the inferior position of the underdeveloped should be redressed through mutual responsibility and by opening the prospects for economic development and democracy under the best possible conditions on the world market.

In that sense, the successful end of the Uruguay Round of negotiations and the establishment of the new World Trade Organization in early 1995 are indeed encouraging. I am convinced that the new General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) will stimulate the further liberalization of world trade and enhance the world trade system, because the reduction and elimination of barriers in world trade will provide a chance not only for a realistic way out for the underdeveloped and countries in transition, but also for the global growth of world trade and economic cooperation as well.

It is no less important that the United Nations and its specialized institutions aim their efforts at increasing international financial support for development and at tackling such acute problems as arrears and debt servicing. These would be very concrete and positive steps towards overcoming the problems of underdevelopment.

The comprehensive character of these problems must be regarded with a very keen awareness of two global aspects as well: protection of the environment and demographic processes. Without these two aspects, a universal programme for economic and social development cannot be envisaged nor can any future for humanity. Global economic interdependence strongly emphasizes the importance of regional and world economic integration processes. Their outlook and advantages are unquestionable and they should be assisted and encouraged by the United Nations. My country views its support of such policies as increasing the possibility of and prospects for its own development as well as the development of other developing countries and countries in transition.

Despite all the worthwhile efforts being made, I regret to note that the Declaration issued at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna is not being carried out as expected. The world is still faced with crude and massive violations of human rights. The tragedies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda are distressing confirmations of this fact. There are many countries where the economic, social and cultural rights of the people are being violated. Policies of racial, ethnic and religious discrimination are widespread. We have been witnesses to "ethnic cleansing" and genocide. And, what is most regrettable of all, these are all used as reasons for waging wars, murdering innocent people on a massive scale and destroying towns and villages.

The region of the Balkans where my country is situated is one such unfortunate example. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina continues. All the efforts of the international community, the Security Council and the most influential countries of the world cannot convince the Bosnian Serbs that peace is the only solution. It is true that the forces of peace are growing. However, the feeling of uncertainty in the region is still present, and even spiraling. It is difficult to foresee a settlement of the situation in the region of the former Yugoslavia that does not include full mutual recognition of the newly independent States and the establishment of diplomatic relations between them.

The sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro have seriously burdened economic conditions in the neighbouring countries, in a region where economic ties had already been severed and economic assistance from the international community is urgently needed. Insecurity in the South Balkans is also growing. The Republic of Macedonia is being exposed to the classic economic aggression of a unilateral economic embargo introduced by Greece in February this year in order to impose its will in matters concerning Macedonian national identity. Serious tensions have also been caused by the most recent developments in Greek-Albanian and Greek-Turkish relations. These are all elements of great concern to us.

Due attention to this situation is being devoted by the relevant responsible international factors and, within this framework, by the Security Council. I should like to reaffirm the positive role and contribution of the peace-keeping forces of the United Nations deployed on a preventive mission in Macedonia, a very successful action undertaken in the interests of peace and deserving wider support.

With its peaceful policy and position, the Republic of Macedonia is a factor for stability in the region. We are sparing no effort to demonstrate that, even in a region as turbulent as ours, other solutions are viable; that peace is guaranteed by human and minority rights; that cohabitation, tolerance and mutual understanding between various ethnic groups is possible; that relations between States become more stable when the principles of the inviolability of borders are respected through cooperation on an equal footing; and that problems can be resolved successfully only through dialogue and political means. For us, a way out of the historical frustrations and war myths in the Balkans is possible only through the implementation of the principles of the new European model of open borders, integration and cooperation.

That is why, today, the Balkan region needs the support of the international community on a number of key issues: an end to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the prevention of a spillover of that war, and the establishment of permanent foundations for peace; the strengthening of democratic processes in all countries and in the region as a whole, and, especially, an increase in awareness of human rights and the rights of national minorities; support for economic reform in these countries, in view of the fact that most of them are now in transition, and, most important, their incorporation into collective security mechanisms.

Mr. Ben Yahia (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The worst threat for the Balkans is the emergence of new divisions and regrouping along religious or ethnic lines. The Balkans cannot remain as a living relic of bloc divisions in Europe and the world, since if it does it will become an open threat to peace and stability on the continent and in the world. This can best be avoided through preventive action by the international community in this region, not only in the form of monitoring missions but through concrete policies which get the job done.

Allow me to conclude by expressing our hope that the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly will serve to strengthen the role of the United Nations, in the interest of peace and security in the world, in the interest of harmony in global economic and social development, in the interest of the survival and protection of planet Earth and in the interest of humanity.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Planning and Environment of the Republic of Seychelles, Her Excellency Mrs. Danielle de St. Jorre.

Mrs. de St. Jorre (Seychelles) *(interpretation from French)*: Mr. President, may we congratulate Mr. Essy and wish him every possible success in exercising your mandate.

Seychelles would like to take this opportunity also to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for the timely and judicious initiatives which he is constantly taking to promote peace, justice and development.

We have gathered together to express the profound aspirations of the countries we represent. We all have our specific problems, our differences, our advantages and our handicaps. We all have many unresolved questions which stem from an international situation where the factors of political and economic instability are becoming increasingly frequent.

The hesitations of a changing world tend to engender a feeling of pessimism, as we see contemporary history being made.

Between the industrially developed countries and those who are still marking time on the path to

development, considerable barriers are blocking the road to sharing and to solidarity.

We now see cruel dissensions arising among peoples that were previously bound by brotherhood.

On the international scene, where we are witnessing a relentless confrontation between divergent interests, what place do we now give to the human dimension in relationships?

The end of this century is constantly being redefined by shocks, upheavals and various types of aggression born of negativism.

More than ever, the success of our societies will depend on their capacity to absorb these shocks and, when there is nothing or little left to reinvest courage, determination and perseverance, in spite of sometimes terrible lack of understanding.

But we also have to reinvest our capabilities, our funds, our means and our inborn willingness - in other words, unprecedented alliances have to be struck; for there is no longer time to philosophize about the world we shall bequeath to our great grandchildren. Because of the unprecedented speeding up of history demographic, economic and social projections are becoming alarming in the medium term and no longer in the long term to which we had grown accustomed through our cozy selfishness or our defiance in the face of the unforeseeable.

The phenomenon of exponential growth, which is widening gaps and encouraging rivalry, causes immediate rather than delayed reactions. We have become our own heirs! Undoubtedly, there is more food for thought in this idea than in many statements.

That illustrates to what extent our efforts must be both planned and creative. It also means that the immediate problem to be tackled is to define our priorities. Here, my thinking is consonant with much of what has been said from this rostrum. Certainly there is no lack of those who plead for a safer, healthier and more prosperous world. And so many conferences and seminars have echoed the same thought and have recalled this idea in their final documents. But we are aware that we have to go beyond this; hence, we are asking for action programmes which mobilize experience, energy and imagination. When continuity of effort is the key factor for success, we must expand the underpinnings of projects, assess results and renew assistance.

In other words, what we are advocating is a definitely prescriptive approach, rather than the sort of analytical and descriptive exercises which has been the comfortable route of many international gatherings.

If we are specific in defining the areas of our deliberations, then the ensuing action will necessarily be based on precise, useful and needed dynamics.

This specificity, in the case of Seychelles as in the case of more than 30 territories throughout the world, is, from the point of view of development, the dual constraint of geographic and demographic smallness and being an island.

Need we recall that the situation of small island States can, in many respects, provide indications as to the future of mankind. Here, more than anywhere else, because of their vulnerability - whether it be due to the fragile ecosystems, the scant economic outlets or the lack of human resources - any dependence necessarily impacts upon the very future of the societies concerned.

The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados, was indeed extremely beneficial for us all. It focused attention on the particular situation of those small States whose relatively high per capita income does not accurately reflect the reality of a situation which donors tend to tie to any aid for development.

There is no doubt that that Conference has been the source of great hope for the small island States. But some remain sceptical. In any case, we hope it will lead to a change in attitude on the part of the industrialized countries with respect to the unique situation of small developing island States, for it is the industrialized countries that will not only have to take up and enlarge upon the concerns of the small island States but also have to set in motion the strategies and the plans of action, which are the only real vehicles of change or of development.

Far be it from us to engage here in singling out the countries or international organizations concerned. However, two years after the Rio Summit we are very disappointed to see that the provisions of Agenda 21 have rarely given rise to actions. Does this mean that the concept of lasting and sustainable development is going to be severely compromised because of a lack of solidarity and international support and failure to respect commitments?

Let us get to the core of the problem. The harmonization of development policies and measures to protect the environment necessarily implies the definition of specific budgetary categories by priority, based on criteria of complementarity as between national effort and international efforts. This must be done free from any spirit of charity, as well as divorced from any evaluation based on *per capita* income.

Let us not forget the backdrop to all this, the fact that in an era where everything occurs on a worldwide level the individual and collective responsibility of States calls for a global approach and equitable sharing of the cost and moral investment the environment represents. Those responsibilities must be consciously assumed.

All these are indicators that merit the attention - the unwavering attention - of decision-making bodies and international donors. In the past, many pronouncements have concluded on a hopeful note. Joined together in an orchestral score, such notes would barely fill out a refrain in praise of development, one that, like a clear conscience, can often sound hollow.

And yet we do not doubt the wisdom of our negotiating partners. There are surely some who would like to deal with questions of development from a dialectical viewpoint, but that is not true of us. If, for us, the essential thing is not to hesitate to be specific, we seek, in return, measures that will be real, meaningful and measurable.

More generally, this could apply to the role women should play in the development process. This is an old debate. Fortunately, the time is now past when women were viewed as non-conventional vehicles of progress. Abolishing a principle, however, although paving the way for many improvements, can also generate a considerable potential for inertia, for the walls of hypocrisy, as we all know, are infinitely thick. It is not enough to quote some cases of women who are entrepreneurs or decision-makers, There have always been some effective women. The important thing is to modify behaviour and practices in real terms, at the societal level, and to analyse and transpose those models and ideas which have from time to time led to good results. That is what we expect from the Beijing Conference.

Where natural prerogative is concerned, we cannot of course speak of delegating authority but here too of equitable and responsible sharing. Indeed, do we in fact have a choice?

Women must act within their communities as a proponent force that is open to change and capable of enriching the dynamic processes linked to changing values. It is impossible to give life without being concerned about survival, without being deeply aware of the changes that affect the individual or the society whenever they give rise to uncertainty and muddy the waters.

Humanism obviously owes a great debt to women. Let us enrich it with our understanding. The woman's identity is strong, but in many places there is still a lack of both recognition and expression, which are the foundations of her legitimacy.

The ideal of legitimacy is a noble concept, in addition to being a good working notion. It is legitimate to look forward to the fulfilment of the promises made in solemn declarations; it is legitimate to expect that intentions so boldly and courageously stated will become promises, and it is also legitimate, when the urgency of the matter no longer leaves time for either declarations of intention or promises, to take action. Consensus can come later.

Here, and in the same spirit, I should like to emphasize our interest in the proposal made by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for swift humanitarian action - what we might call a "spontaneous reaction" - whenever called for. For here again we are talking about the legitimacy that endows the human entity with dignity and makes it worthy of respect.

Before concluding I should like to appeal to all countries and peoples present here to unite our efforts to take one large step towards world brotherhood. Let us overturn the rigid barriers of all kinds of self-interest, let us be attentive to the needs of others and the future of our planet. Let us shape our relationships for active solidarity and willing adherence to the principle of shared responsibility.

On such vital questions there is no place for trite official statements. In coming decades, no one will be fooled by our unwillingness to engage, openly, fully and with determination, on the path of well-being, especially when it is the neediest of us who most require it.

That is the price of true unity among nations. And we in Seychelles harbor this desire to stand alongside all countries in concluding the unprecedented alliance that

will guide the great ship of mankind towards the shores of the third millenium.

It is up to us to ensure that those shores will be welcoming ones.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I call on Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al-Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) *(interpretation from Arabic):* I should like, at the outset, to express to Mr. Essy and to his friendly country my Government's and my personal congratulations on his election to the Presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. We are confident that his abilities and skills will enable him to discharge his responsibilities in the best possible manner.

I should like also to congratulate the members of the General Committee on their election to that body.

On this occasion I cannot fail to express the appreciation of the delegation of the State of Qatar, as well as my personal appreciation, to Mr. Essy's predecessor as President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Samuel Insanally, who represents the friendly Republic of Guyana, for his excellent leadership and the work carried out during his tenure.

It is also my pleasure to extend our congratulations to those States that have recently joined our international Organization. We look forward to their constructive and effective participation in the activities of the United Nations and to their defence of its principles.

In that context, I salute the delegation of the Republic of South Africa and that country's great leader, Nelson Mandela, the first African President of the State, which, in this new chapter of its history, will undoubtedly be a new Member representing the African continent and the international community. We are convinced that it will play an outstanding role, for which it is eminently qualified by its stature, as well as by its expertise in all fields.

I should like also to reaffirm the State of Qatar's full confidence in and special appreciation of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his commitment and devotion in the service of this international Organization and for his efforts to uphold the noble principles of the United Nations and to promote its international peace-keeping and peacemaking role in dealing with international problems and crises. This is a role that will undoubtedly increase in importance.

The General Assembly's forty-ninth session is being held in the shadow of dynamic and rapid changes in international relations. These rapid dynamic changes have not yet reached their culmination. We are in a period of transition wherein new patterns of international relations are constantly emerging. It is a period in which the so-called new international order is being formed.

The most important underpinnings on which this new order must rest are, in our view, respect for the principles and purposes of the United Nations and its Charter, in particular, the principle of sovereign co-equality, the willingness of States to honour their commitments in good faith, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, the control by States of their natural resources, the non-use and the absence of the threat of the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of other States, and the resolution of international disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the principles of international law through mediation, dialogue or through the International Court of Justice.

With the ending of the cold war, a new era has dawned in the United Nations. This international Organization is now being resorted to increasingly and more urgently. The United Nations mechanism is now squarely in the forefront of international efforts to face up to problems that in the past were intractable. Such problems are now being examined and debated in a serious manner in the United Nations and its specialized organs and agencies with the aim of finding suitable solutions thereto.

In this regard, the State of Qatar believes that the United Nations and its specialized organs and agencies are the most appropriate framework for deliberation on issues relating to peace-keeping and peacemaking, the peaceful settlement of international disputes, questions of development and the forging of just and balanced economic and social relations.

Given today's challenges, there is no doubt that the solving of such problems should be the collective responsibility of all States regardless of size, if the solutions devised are to be compatible with the interests of the entire international community. Therefore, the State of Qatar supports efforts to restructure this international Organization and its bodies in order to make

them more democratic and dynamic so that they may become more suited to the task of satisfying new international requirements and dealing with the challenges of peace, development, the issues of international peace and security, as well as economic and social issues.

These issues are dictated by the radical transformations in the patterns of international relations. First of all, there must be a balanced relationship between the General Assembly as the principal political body, the Security Council as the body responsible for questions of security, and the Economic and Social Council as the body responsible for issues of economic and social development.

In addition, the General Assembly and its resolutions must be given a more effective role as a framework for deliberations and negotiations and for the adoption of resolutions on issues of international importance. This is fully in line with the commitment by all States to the principle of sovereign co-equality and the right of effective participation in the upholding of the common interests of the international community.

No one State or group of States, regardless of stature or power, should monopolize the fashioning of the new international order in the absence of the United Nations, which is the true representative of the international community. Such a new order must be fashioned by all States collectively through the United Nations, whose stature and efficacy must be enhanced and supported as the only forum for international deliberations, the body responsible for international peace and security and the body that has the overall responsibility for economic and social development, the protection of the environment and of human rights as well as for combating drugs and terrorism.

In this context, I should like to express my support for the statement in the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" that democracy within the family of nations requires the fullest consultation, participation and engagement of all States, large and small, in the work of the Organization.

I should like to refer also to the statement in the same report that the employment of preventive diplomacy requires prior knowledge of potential disputes, participation in peacemaking and peace-keeping, support for the agreements concluded and the taking of measures that aim at resolving the economic, social and political problems that led to the dispute in the first place.

We welcome the positive developments in the role of the Security Council and its ability to perform the role mandated to it by the Charter, thanks to the new spirit of cooperation that emerged between its members and enabled it to take collective measures in respect of some very difficult and sensitive issues and to assume new responsibilities such as the expansion of its authority in respect of some peace-keeping issues through the administration of some areas during periods of transition and through the supervision of elections and the protection of human rights. None the less, we have some fears that the Council may become an institution that is used to impose the will of the strong on the weak.

Therefore, we believe that the exercise by certain members of particular rights and privileges must not lead to hegemony by a limited number of strong States over the course of events in the world. Thus we believe that the question of membership of the Security Council must be dealt with in a manner that takes into account the large increase in the membership of the United Nations while putting some checks on the use of the right of veto.

In addition, the international community must respect the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Political will must be mobilized to implement those resolutions, to impose peace if conditions so require, or to negotiate peace if there is good faith and if the parties cooperate. We believe that this is the guaranteed means of protecting the new international order and of ensuring its acceptability, credibility and stability.

We hope that the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will mark the rebirth of a new, stronger and more democratic body. In this regard, we are encouraged by discussions, within and outside the United Nations, regarding the restructuring of the Organization and its various organs. These are very constructive, serious and objective discussions, and all the States of the world are participating in them.

The State of Qatar, proceeding from the wise instructions of the Emir, His Royal Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani, and his loyal heir, His Royal Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, has always participated by all means in the solution of issues related to the Arab Gulf, as well as the Arab and Islamic nation. We have supported the Gulf Cooperation Council because it serves the interests of the Gulf States and their peoples. We, as part of the region, believe that our security is closely linked to the region's. We have

supported stability in the region and rejected every attempt to bring about regional changes by force. We believe that the security of the region requires cooperation amongst all its States on the basis of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect, non-intervention in internal affairs and respect for international law. We hold that all unresolved problems should be resolved by peaceful means, through dialogue, mediation or the International Court of Justice.

Proceeding from this principle, the State of Qatar supports the resolution by such means of the current dispute between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran over the three islands of Abu Moussa and the two Tumbs.

On the Arab level, the State of Qatar has continually called for the airing of issues in the Arab world and for reconciliation, in order to promote Arab solidarity so that the Arab Umma may resume its role in history and in the march of civilization.

We have followed with the greatest concern the regrettable events in the Republic of Yemen. Since the dispute began, the State of Qatar has participated in diplomatic efforts to contain it. Despite the bloody and regrettable struggle, friendly Yemen has maintained its unity. As you know, from the beginning we have stood on the side of legality and unity in Yemen, and we have been eager to abide by these two principles in dealing with the issue, proceeding from our faith in the need to maintain the unity of the Yemenite territory and people.

As for the situation in Iraq, our position is that the unity of Iraq and its territorial integrity must be maintained. Iraq must commit itself to the implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions. It must recognize the sovereignty of the state of Kuwait and its territorial integrity, as well as its internationally recognized border according to United Nations Security Council resolutions. We also sympathize with the Iraqi people and call for the alleviation of their hardship, taking into account the acute shortage of medicines and foodstuffs.

Concerning peace in the Middle East, we support the process and hope that negotiations will achieve concrete progress on all tracks, particularly concerning Lebanon and Syria. Last year, we welcomed the Palestinian-Israeli agreement as a landmark on the road to a just solution to the Palestinian question. We now welcome the subsequent steps taken, namely the early transfer of authority and the expansion of self-rule, both of which are important steps towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine. We also welcome the Jordanian-Israeli declaration as to the ending of the state of war between the two countries and the initiation of serious negotiations to resolve all problems, specifically those concerning water and borders. This declaration is also a landmark on the road towards a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the Madrid formula; Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); the land-for-peace principle; the full withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied territories (the Golan Heights, the southern part of Lebanon, Jerusalem); the restoration of all inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination; and the creation of a State whose capital will be Jerusalem, as it is a symbol of peace and is part and parcel of the territories occupied since 1967. During the transitional period, the situation in this territory, particularly its demographic aspects, should not be changed. I wish here to reiterate the need to put a stop to the process of Israeli settlement, which is illegal and constitutes a major hurdle in the way of peace. Proceeding from this, the General Assembly should reaffirm, at its current session, all previous resolutions regarding the question of Palestine and the Middle East problem, and declare them unalienable.

In order to push ahead the peace process in the Middle East, we participated in the multilateral negotiations. We indicated that those negotiations did not replace bilateral negotiations but complemented them, and that they would lead to nothing unless a just and comprehensive peace was achieved in the region. In this regard, the State of Qatar hosted, from 2 to 5 May 1994, the fifth meeting of the Working Group on Disarmament and Regional Security in the Middle East, which developed from the multilateral negotiations.

The position of Qatar was stated as follows. First, support for all international efforts aimed at achieving agreement on disarmament on the regional and international levels, and support for the efforts of the Disarmament Conference in this respect. Second, the arrangements of arms control after the achievement of peace should be based on legally binding and co-equal commitments by all parties under international law and in conformity with the United Nations Charter. Third, arms control efforts on the international level have achieved remarkable success, particularly between the Russian Federation and the United States as indicated by the signing of START and all subsequent steps. Yet those efforts have not achieved any tangible progress in the Middle East, since one State continues to retain its

nuclear capabilities. Fourth, all States are called upon to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to agree to abide by its safeguards and subject their nuclear facilities to international inspections. The region must be freed from all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. In this regard, we wonder how the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency could decide to resume its technical assistance to Israel, while Israel continues to reject the NPT and refuses to submit to its safeguards regime.

We follow with great concern the situation in brotherly Somalia. We hope that national reconciliation will safeguard the unity, independence and stability of Somalia. On this occasion, we wish to support the decision by the Arab Foreign Ministers to set up an Arab ministerial committee that would monitor the situation in Somalia and work towards the desired reconciliation alongside the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

As for Afghanistan, we express our concern over the continuing violence and call upon all factions to halt hostilities and work for a permanent and peaceful settlement that would give precedence to the interests of the Afghani people.

Since the Second World War, Europe has not witnessed a tragedy such as that which is unfolding in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The suffering imposed on the Muslim people through the atrocities of ethnic cleansing, genocide and mass killings at the hands of Serb aggressors constitute crimes which far exceed all those committed in Europe in the course of the Second World War. Despite the fact that the Serbs reject the international peace plan drawn up by the five States and accepted by Bosnia and Herzegovina, no disciplinary action has been taken against the Serb aggressors, while the embargoes are still in place against Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the very least, the international community should enable the Muslims to exercise the right of self-defence, a legitimate right enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Once again, together with other members of the Islamic world we ask, why is it that there is all this procrastination in dealing with the Serbs, and why are they allowed to hold on to the land they have acquired by force and on which they continue to practice the atrocities of ethnic cleansing? The international community is called upon to deal with this matter firmly with no double standards and in a manner that would guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and guarantee for it an economic situation that may enable it to survive. This would certainly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in that sensitive region of the world.

The President returned to the Chair.

The State of Qatar reiterates its condemnation of this aggression and reaffirms the independence of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, its territorial integrity, its sovereignty and its unity with and its one indivisible capital, Sarajevo.

While we welcomed the resolution adopted by the United States Congress and agreed to by the Administration to lift the embargo against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have been surprised by the latest resolution by the Security Council, which included a relaxation of the sanctions imposed on Serbia and Montenegro, the State that stands beside the Serbian militias in their continuing aggression against the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe that the said resolution will have grave consequences as it rewards the aggressor and the forces that support that aggression and constitutes a retreat in the face of aggression, massacres and continuing ethnic crimes.

In this regard, we call on the Security Council not to reward aggression. We call upon it to discharge its responsibilities towards the protection of the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina by declaring the entire Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina a safe haven. The Council must ensure that no military assistance is allowed to reach the Serbs. The Muslims must be enabled to exercise their legitimate right to self-defence by the lifting of the embargo on their country. Once again, we emphasize that the war criminals in the former Yugoslavia must be brought to justice and support the demand by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) contact group on Bosnia and Herzegovina to be allowed to participate in all activities of the contact group of five.

The world economy is slowly emerging from the state of stagnation which has lasted for far too long. A new period of varying degrees of growth has started, particularly in the third world. Numerous elements had contributed to that situation. Foremost among those elements was the burden of foreign debt which is being aggravated by the deterioration in prices of basic export commodities side by side with the paucity of foreign investments in the areas of production and the very high expenditures on armaments. The time has come for the

international community, in particular the developed industrial States, to adopt effective measures that would make it possible to devise a definitive solution to the problems of indebtedness in the third world as a whole, and in Africa in particular.

The debt burden in Africa has had many grave consequences which have affected the ability of the continent to grow and develop. Despite the many debt rescheduling agreements concluded over the past few years, the servicing of debt continues to consume over 22 per cent of all export earnings and continues to obstruct investment and human development.

In this context, the dialogue between the North and the South should be reactivated in a more effective manner in order to find new means to achieve development in the third world and to rid the third world of poverty and underdevelopment. We believe that ridding the world of poverty and underdevelopment is an essential prerequisite of lasting peace and the welfare of mankind.

Undoubtedly, success in the dialogue between North and South and productive cooperation between them will promote efforts to reach a new more realistic and more balanced international economic order. The development of the South is not merely in the interests of its States and peoples alone, it is also in the interests of the North and its people.

The developing world pins its hopes on international trade as a means of achieving prosperity for all. We therefore welcomed the recent success achieved with regard to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and hope that this success will result in the freeing of trade and of unrestricted competition in the world.

The threats facing mankind today, and which will continue to face it in future, are not all political or military. There are questions of the deterioration of the environment, poverty, underdevelopment, drugs, the spread of life-threatening diseases, terrorism and violations of human rights which become more grave with each passing day. These non-political issues require urgent solutions before they become intractable and threaten all mankind.

Among the indications of the international community's concern with economic and social issues is the large number of international conferences devoted to such issues. Over the past two years, the world witnessed the holding of several such conferences, including the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, and next year the World Summit for Social Development will be held in Copenhagen. Each one of the conferences that have been convened has achieved results with regard to the issues it has dealt with by means of resolutions and recommendations and the international consensus surrounding those resolutions and recommendations.

All we wish for here is that those issues should not be used as a pretext to intervene in the internal affairs of States, to deal with States in a discriminatory manner, or to impose conditions on providing economic or developmental aid.

I refer in this connection to the idea of a carbon tax, whether individual or collective, under the pretext of protecting the environment. This is purely an economic issue which will harm the economies of oil-producing States, particularly those in the Gulf.

The State of Qatar reaffirms its support for the United Nations efforts to deal with the issues I have mentioned. The United Nations is the ideal institution to face up to international and world issues with all their political, humanitarian, economic and social dimensions. Inspired by the Charter, it can achieve success by building a world based on relations of cooperation and mutual confidence, a world of justice and stability.

The meeting rose at 7.45 p.m.

United Nations A/49/PV.10

General Assembly
Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

10th Meeting
Thursday, 29 September 1994, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy ..... (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Address by Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova

The President *(interpretation from French)*: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Moldova, His Excellency Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Snegur *(spoke in Moldovan; English text furnished by the delegation)*: Allow me at the outset, Sir, to extend to you my cordial and sincere congratulations on the occasion of your election as President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I am convinced that your competence and active cooperation with Member States will pave the way for a successful and fruitful session.

At the same time, I should like to express my deep gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally for the outstanding work accomplished in his capacity as President of the previous session.

I should also like to express sentiments of our utmost consideration to His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose activities in redefining the role of this prestigious Organization in this changing world enjoy the appreciation and support of the Republic of Moldova.

I am honoured to represent the Republic of Moldova for the second time at this rostrum. Nearly three years ago, in March 1992, I expressed gratitude to Member States for their considerable support extended to my country by recognizing it at the international level as an independent State and by accepting it into the large family of the United Nations.

Looking back over these years, I should like to note that the Republic of Moldova gained its independence in a complex political context in which the aspirations for freedom and democracy of nations led to the collapse of totalitarian regimes and the emergence of new States.

Unfortunately, those positive changes were followed by negative tendencies, such as threats to subregional and regional security. Moreover, we are witnessing the reappearance and aggravation of some older problems connected to national minorities, territorial disputes, the presence of foreign military troops on the territory of new independent States, the intensification of some separatist tendencies, often inspired and directed from abroad, and so on.

Under these circumstances, the state of affairs is more complex than we could imagine. The euphoria that

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followed the events in Eastern Europe and on the territory of the former Soviet Union generated in some the opinion that the two main objectives - democratization of society and building a market-oriented economy, both compulsory for the institutional reintegration of new States into the democratic world - would not face serious obstacles. Now, however, we find that there is a desynchronization and even a time disparity between those two objectives. I would say that that disparity is even more evident in the new independent States that emerged as a result of the collapse of the former Soviet Union. In this sense, the Republic of Moldova is no exception.

The situation requires a larger conceptual and practical effort to correct such desynchronizations. It is obvious that the United Nations cannot remain indifferent to the difficulties that confront the countries in transition. In this connection, we consider that the Secretary-General's intention to draw up an agenda for development is particularly opportune, and we welcome it. In our opinion the assistance granted by the United Nations to young States should be provided on the basis of the concrete conditions prevailing in every specific country and the programmes being elaborated in each.

Located at the intersection of the geopolitical interests of some great Powers, Moldova was incorporated into a State and political entity in which democratic values were meaningless. The experience of Moldova is different from that of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where the communist "freezer" functioned for only four decades and something was preserved from the previous democratic development. That is why we had to begin the process of democratization and market transition almost from the very beginning. The deepening of the economic crisis can be explained to a large extent by the fact that we do not have at our disposal sufficient financial and energy resources or the raw materials necessary to support these reforms.

In addition, our country's potential was affected this year by a natural disaster of which the international community has already been informed. We suffered human losses and considerable material damage, and we had to mobilize every effort and all resources to subdue the elements and overcome their consequences. Our voice was heard by the international community. I should like to express my sincere gratitude to the international organizations and countries that granted humanitarian assistance to the Republic of Moldova and my sincere gratitude to the Members of the United Nations for their understanding and sympathy, which they manifested by adopting the resolution (48/266) entitled "Emergency assistance to the Republic of Moldova" during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Over the three years that have elapsed since the proclamation of the independence of the Republic of Moldova, on 27 August 1991, our decision to develop democracy and a State of law with a market economy has remained firm, in spite of transitional difficulties. This firm decision is being realized through our efforts to create the necessary legislative premises for promoting reforms, including privatization, for transforming the economy to one based on market relations and for ensuring respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The recent parliamentary elections held on a multi-party basis were free and fair, and this was confirmed by international observers. Another significant event was the adoption of the Constitution, which paves the way for the real independence and democracy chosen by the people of the Republic of Moldova.

The Republic of Moldova has ratified a series of important international Conventions on human rights. We have consequently undertaken new commitments to change the internal juridical framework in accordance with international standards. Measures have been taken to guarantee the rights of the national minorities, some of which were on the edge of losing their identity during the Soviet regime. Many provisions of Moldovan legislation are aimed at protecting the right to retain, develop and utilize the language spoken on the territory of the country. Under the new Constitution, special forms of autonomy may be granted to some human settlements in the east and south of the Republic of Moldova in accordance with special juridical statutes adopted under the constitutional laws. For example, a draft for such a statute for the southern region is being examined in the Parliament.

We consider that the good intentions of the Government of the Republic of Moldova and its concrete and positive actions represent essential premises for the elimination of sources of tension. It is our strong belief that they can be eliminated, and with less controversy, not through the use of force but in a peaceful way through negotiation and dialogue; as an old saying teaches us: "It is better to have a year of negotiations than a day of war". This is true, since any armed conflict provokes human and material losses.

The Republic of Moldova is and will remain fully committed to constructive negotiations, on the condition, of course, that all the parties involved demonstrate political will and common sense.

At the same time we cannot ignore the fact that in spite of reasonable compromises made by Chisinau, tendencies of separatism still exist in eastern regions, and human rights continue to be flagrantly violated. For example, despite the fact that the Moldovan authorities and several international organizations, including the United Nations, have expressed their deep concern about the situation of the "Ilascu Group", as of today the members of the Group are still illegally detained. Another example is this: the Moldovans from the left bank of the Dniester river are prohibited from using the Latin alphabet in their schooling. The separatist leaders from Tiraspol continue to obstruct the signing of the already-endorsed agreement on the legal status and the modalities and stages of the complete withdrawal of the 14th Army.

I want to emphasize once again that a complete, orderly and unconditional withdrawal of foreign military troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova is the will of our people. This will is clearly reflected in our Constitution, which forbids the deployment of foreign troops on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. In this context, it should be mentioned that the authorities of the Russian Federation show a correct understanding of our position. I would like to underline the important role of the international community, the international organizations, including the United Nations, and especially the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in facilitating the bilateral negotiations.

I avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate Estonia and Latvia on the withdrawal of foreign military troops from their territory and, at the same time, to express our hope that the international community will support the same kind of appropriate and orderly withdrawal of foreign troops in the case of the Republic of Moldova.

I should like to touch upon the subject of separatism and discuss it in a larger perspective. It is well known that many regions of the world are currently affected by separatist tendencies. Respecting the right of nations to self-determination - a fundamental right outlined in international documents - we cannot ignore the fact that this right is often used as a tool serving the interests of certain political groups and, in that context, this right has nothing to do with the legitimate aspirations of people to liberty and national sovereignty.

Today, in my opinion, at the end of the millennium the separatist phenomenon is an extremely negative one, and to ignore it can lead to tragic consequences for many countries - indeed, for the entire world. In such circumstances, can we afford to allow dozens of artificially induced States to emerge as a result of the pressure of certain interested political groups? Will this further the strengthening of international stability and security? We do not believe so. Given that the majority of States have a multi-ethnic configuration, and could be affected by such separatist tendencies, we cannot but emphasize the dangers this might entail. That is why we believe that this kind of separatism - today's deadly world virus - must be condemned by the international community. We think that this issue should be more closely examined, and we hope that the United Nations will give due attention to this matter.

The Republic of Moldova has joined the United Nations as a young European country. Our European aspirations are determined by our geopolitical and cultural affiliations to the European democratic space, and we are linked to it by our Latin heritage also. For us, to be isolated from the European space and its values means to facilitate the re-emergence of some influences from which we suffered painfully in the recent past. That is why our vital and fundamental goal is the integration of our country into Europe. In this context, we firmly look forward to increasing cooperation and linkage with the Council of Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Western European Union (WEU), and the CSCE, including expanding our relations with the European Union, which represents the main guarantee of democratic practices and values.

The implementation of our options depends crucially on the willingness of the economic and political-strategic Euro-Atlantic structures to support Moldova actively.

I think that establishing economic relations with the independent States of the former Soviet Union and joining the Commonwealth of Independent States - where we participate only in the economic structures and are not involved in collective security or political-military cooperation - will not become an obstacle to our gradual integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures. We believe that in these times nobody wants new dividing lines in Europe or in any other part of the world. On the contrary, we need to eliminate those once generated by

the cold war. At the turn of the century, not only Europe but the whole world finds itself in a complex process of transformation. We want to establish new forms of collaboration that would respond to the aspirations and the needs of all States.

The day is approaching when the international community will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. In all these years the United Nations has been - and it remains - the major universal centre for maintaining peace and international security and for mobilizing the efforts of States, in cooperation with regional organizations, towards settling global issues. The Republic of Moldova has the honour to contribute, together with other States, to the implementation of the noble ideals of the World Organization. I am especially pleased to inform the Assembly that a committee for coordinating the activities and manifestations dedicated to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has been created in the Republic of Moldova.

In calling to mind the achievements and successes of the United Nations system, we cannot but mention the fact that so far it has operated under the guidance of a Charter conceived 50 years ago. I think that the new international realities might call for some essential modifications to adapt the provisions of the Charter to these realities.

The Republic of Moldova supports the reforms initiated by the United Nations aimed at improving the efficiency of the Organization and its major bodies.

Our country shares the views expressed by the delegations of many countries within the Open-ended Working Group regarding the issue of fair representation on the Security Council. The Council's composition, its functioning and methods of work should be modified without affecting the efficiency of its activities in its main field, which is ensuring international peace and security.

Taking into account the active role and contribution performed in the United Nations by Germany and Japan and their possibilities of assuming specific responsibilities in keeping international peace and security, Moldova supports the candidatures of these two countries as permanent members of the Security Council. Our position on fair representation on the Security Council is that it is necessary to take into account all regional groups recognized in the United Nations. In this sense, the Republic of Moldova supports the proposal of the Netherlands to grant an additional seat to each geographic group, including countries from Eastern Europe.

Consultations and debates on such an important subject should be supplemented with practical organizational and procedural measures, such as setting up some subsidiary bodies of the Security Council in accordance with Article 29 of the Charter, and increasing and expanding cooperation with the General Assembly and the regional organizations.

At the same time, we consider that the working methods of the most representative body of the United Nations - the General Assembly - could also be modified. We are all interested in directing those activities as much as possible towards consolidating the principles of justice, democracy and development. The delegation of Moldova supports the decisions adopted at the forty-seventh session aimed at increasing the efficiency of the General Assembly and rationalizing the activities of its Commissions.

There is a direct link between peace and security on the one hand and economic and social development on the other. In this new era, when the United Nations is increasing its efforts to maintain international peace and security, we should not forget about the persistence of inequalities and of grave social and economic problems, which affect all countries, particularly those in transition and the developing ones. In this sense, reform of the Organization should include economic and social mechanisms, especially the Economic and Social Council. This reform, already initiated, should be more effective in implementation and be more rational in the utilization of available resources.

In this context, I should like to stress the importance of the two previous sessions of the Commission for Sustainable Development, whose work we hope will maintain and intensify the impulse generated by the Rio de Janeiro Conference on Environment and Development with respect to the rapid implementation of the commitments made in the framework of Agenda 21.

Turning to another matter, I would like to note that the Republic of Moldova is aware of the financial crisis of the Organization. We are not indifferent to this situation, and I would like to assure the Assembly that my country will do its best to fulfil its commitments. The recommendations of the last session of the Committee on Contributions concerning the re-examination and adjustment of the scale of assessments

of Member States reflect more justly States' real capacity to pay. We hope that the General Assembly will take these recommendations into consideration in the spirit of justice and solidarity which characterizes the United Nations.

In conclusion, I express the hope that the constructive atmosphere that characterizes the United Nations will help us to identify the problems faced by the international community and to find the necessary solutions.

The delegation of the Republic of Moldova expresses its readiness to cooperate most actively and efficiently with the delegations of other States in order to achieve the high goals of the United Nations.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Moldova for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Suriname.

Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Suriname, His Excellency Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Venetiaan: Our world is moving into a new era which has not yet taken a permanent shape. This process of change entails profound transformations, some of which promote development, the rule of law, respect for human rights and care for the environment, while others present a serious threat to life and to the world itself. During this process cultural, social and political principles which once seemed to be of eternal value are superseded by new ones.

In many parts of the world instability reigns, causing tragedy and chaos.

In these challenging times, Sir, your unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session merits compliments. Your election to this high office is a demonstration of the Member States' confidence in you. The Republic of Suriname is convinced that under Your Excellency's guidance our deliberations during this important year will produce tangible results.

We pay tribute to Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana for the excellent way in which he presided at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

The vital, extraordinary and excellent manner in which Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali fulfils his mission as Secretary-General of the United Nations in these critical times of intensified disputes, war and violence earns our gratitude, admiration and respect. We wish to thank him most heartily and, at the same time, congratulate him on his important role in shaping the future of the international system.

Events during recent years have confronted the international community with the reality that the demise of the confrontational clash of ideologies did not automatically usher in the stability and prosperity to which we all aspire. Immense problems persist in the political, social and economic spheres and at the national, regional and international levels.

We are witnessing the eruption, the continuation and the spreading of severe national and ethnic rivalries, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda. These conflicts and disputes have given rise to the emergence of a large number of displaced persons, who are subjected to the worst kind of harassment, starvation and deprivation.

These manifestations are compounded by practices that once again leave a shameful blot on our civilization. The international community cannot close its eyes to these practices or fail to act in the face of such horrifying and unacceptable situations. Such crises, regardless of the various causes and motives from which they may ensue, tend to have in common the fact that masses of innocent women, children and elderly people pay the price and bear the brunt of conflicts and wars.

The real concern is not only the number of victims claimed or the scale of the destruction that may ensue but

also the possibility that the seeds of those conflicts will spread, both in the developed and in the developing countries, in the absence of the attention of a world order capable of containing and addressing their causes.

It is legitimate for the international community to regard these problems as a shared burden and to strive for their peaceful and prompt solution on the basis of practical cooperation. We should in the short term resort to such mechanisms as are deemed practical to come to the immediate rescue of those who are suffering. Furthermore, we should increase our efforts to eliminate the deeprooted causes of the unresolved national conflicts, to ensure the civil and human rights of ethnic minorities and to promote peaceful coexistence through respect for each other's race, colour, ethnicity, religion and sex. If we fail to do so, the suffering will be prolonged and will threaten regional and international peace and security.

As we discuss the issues now confronting our world, we cannot but refer to the importance of building a new reality that aims at the full development of the people's potential through the establishment of peace, the building of democracy and the shaping of sound economies.

We know that it is a difficult process to establish democracy, dependable democratic institutions and a democratic culture. Notwithstanding the commitment or vigour with which our Governments strive to achieve this objective, the process is bound to be slow and full of complications. Suriname is convinced, however, that we must endeavour to reach this goal, led by the perception that the core of democracy, as we see it, is not merely adherence to an ideal system but one of the most important prerequisites for a stable, united and integrated society that can swiftly settle its differences, realize its aspirations and enjoy and preserve its cultural, political and socio-economic achievements.

The commitment of Suriname to the cause of democracy is strengthened by the distressing experience of the rule of dictatorship under which its people had to live some years ago. There are indeed tremendous efforts involved in bringing a democratic system back on track.

Our involvement in the building of a new national political reality establishes a link between us and the regional process of political renewal, in which Governments of the region are faced with the complex task of restoring and safeguarding democracy.

Indeed, in Latin America and the Caribbean, democracy has suffered some severe setbacks.

The problems of Haiti are of particular concern to us. The violent and illegal interruption of the democratic process in this country has led to continued violations of human rights, to increased poverty and to suffering for the Haitian people, as well as to the flight of thousands from their home country. It is against this background that my Government has granted a request to provide a temporary safe haven for Haitian refugees and has pledged its support to the multinational force.

Furthermore, my Government decided to make members of the national army and the police force available to the United Nations mission in Haiti, which, within the framework of the implementation of Security Council resolution 940 (1994), will become operational simultaneously with the restoration of the democratic Government under the leadership of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

My Government's decision to support and participate in the United Nations mission in Haiti was inspired by its conception of regional and international responsibility to contribute to the safeguarding of constitutional democracy in the region.

We believe that our hemisphere is in need of permanent mechanisms to guarantee swift and direct action when democracy is threatened - for example, by the unconstitutional take-over of Governments.

The significant efforts made by the United Nations and the Organization of American States, including the various resolutions adopted, the missions sent to Haiti and the threat of an immediate military intervention, have finally convinced the military leadership to step down not later than 15 October.

In a general sense, we are hopeful that current developments in Haiti, which are the result of initiatives taken within the framework of the United Nations, will lead to a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Suriname wishes to emphasize that all efforts to restore democracy in Haiti will appear to have been in vain if the rich countries do not forthwith pool financial resources in a fund for the reconstruction and development of Haiti.

The developments in South Africa which led to the demise of the abhorrent regime of apartheid and to the establishment of a democratic and non-racist South Africa

have led to the conviction that in the end the rightful struggle of people for justice, equality and majority rule will meet with success. Indeed, the birth of the new South Africa last April has demonstrated that structures imposed by force cannot survive the determination of those who seek justice.

The people and Government of the Republic of Suriname wish to congratulate the people of South Africa and their leaders, especially President Nelson Mandela, on this success, which will have a positive impact on the world community.

We are all greatly indebted to the Special Committee against Apartheid, which for 32 years played a vital role in global efforts to end apartheid. My country is confident that the new Government in South Africa will cope well with the new challenges it faces. We hope that the international community will not wait to assist the new Government in bringing about the necessary economic and social changes to build a future of security, stability and prosperity for the South African people.

The many positive political changes and international breakthroughs resulting from the end of the cold-war era have had a profound influence on the problem of the Middle East, especially the Palestine issue. The conflict has taken a positive turn in line with those changes. My Government wishes to record its satisfaction over the historic agreement signed between Israel and Jordan, which followed the accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in September 1993. The historic opportunity to achieve lasting peace has now materialized and the international community must guarantee that this important momentum is not lost.

The statistics of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the United Nations give rise to only one conclusion: that we live in a world beset by inequality, gross disparity and imbalance in the distribution of wealth and resources, and urgent solutions for the economic situation of developing countries are required.

The problem of economic imbalance is not limited to a few countries or to one region. It is a global issue - just as peace and democracy are global issues - and for that reason this forum must deal with it as a matter of priority. No longer is it the nuclear nightmare that frightens us most: rather, it is the scourge of poverty, which continues to erode the foundations of our civilization.

In Suriname, as elsewhere in Latin America, the Caribbean and other regions, bold but necessary reforms have been set in motion to eliminate obstacles to development and economic competitiveness in order to adapt to new international realities. In this context, my country is endeavouring to rehabilitate and reconstruct the beleaguered economy of our nation on a sound and solid foundation.

Within the framework of these economic reforms we consider the development of human resources to be a priority issue. We consider it to be extremely important to improve the living conditions and basic health and nutrition of our people. We are committed to these goals because we believe that every human being has the ultimate right to development.

The austerity measures which were subscribed to by my Government have not been easy to implement because of the weakness of the economy and the hardships and suffering they impose on our people. Notwithstanding the progress made so far, it is obvious that such an undertaking calls for the availability of vast resources, which cannot be mobilized at the national level only. We therefore have called on the international community to provide assistance to complement our domestic efforts. In particular, we have called on our historical partner to fulfil the agreements reached in this context and to support us in our attempts to create prosperity for our people.

We must add to this that it is our obligation to see to it that our need for aid does not lead to the recolonization of our country.

My Government shares the international community's concern for the fragile ecosystem in our world, which must be protected. Like other developing countries, Suriname is confronted with the challenge to meet its present development needs and simultaneously safeguard the environment and natural resources for generations to come. In trying to establish a sound balance between development and environment my Government has committed itself to taking all the measures necessary to protect and preserve the environment, in accordance with the guidelines adopted by the Rio de Janeiro Conference, and has incorporated the concept of sustainable development in its national development programmes.

If the international community does not have the political will to deal effectively with the crises occurring

in so many economies, the world will continue to lack stability and will remain vulnerable to upheavals and setbacks that could undermine the foundations of the future.

In the context of the recently held International Conference on Population and Development and the forthcoming Fourth World Conference on Women, a World Summit for Social Development is therefore a timely initiative as it will provide an opportunity to embark on an in-depth analysis of human development in all its aspects. These international meetings should afford all of us the opportunity to address in an integrated manner the issues of poverty, unemployment and social integration.

In Latin America and the Caribbean various encouraging initiatives have been taken to deal effectively with the imperatives of economic and social development and to enhance the capability of the countries of the region to respond to the pressing challenges ahead. Joint efforts aimed at the strengthening of regional integration and cooperation have been made.

On 24 July 1994 in Cartagena, Colombia, we stood at the cradle of the Association of Caribbean States, an association which brings together member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the countries of Central America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Suriname, Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela. This is indeed proof of the growing awareness among the leadership in the region that closer economic and political relations are tools to enhance our capacity to bring prosperity to our peoples. By joining the Association of Caribbean States, Suriname has demonstrated that it is part of the region and wants to participate in the shaping of its future.

Suriname has also explored the possibility of joining CARICOM as a full member since it believes that by joining Suriname will both enhance its own capacity to intensify regional cooperation and bring to the Caribbean Community its cultural richness and its economic opportunities.

Our hemisphere, which includes both developed and developing countries, is being challenged to take the opportunity provided by global changes to develop initiatives for the cultivation of international relations conducive to prosperity for all on the basis of sustainable development, social reform and equity.

In the light of these aims, my country welcomes the proposed Summit for the Americas, to be held in December 1994, at which representatives of countries of the Western hemisphere will come together to address these issues and to act as catalysts for the changes needed in the development patterns of both the countries of the North and those of the South in order for them to reach their common goals.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has on many occasions been described as one of the most important multilateral legal instruments of our century. My Government participated actively in its preparation, and I take great pleasure in congratulating the world community on the coming into force of this Convention on 16 November 1994.

On behalf of my Government, I also wish to express my satisfaction with the agreement that has been reached with regard to the mining of minerals in the deep sea-bed, as contemplated in the aforementioned Convention.

All Members of the United Nations pledge their support for the principles and initiatives of the United Nations. At the same time, the Member States are keeping an eye both on the kind of support and on the level of assistance they can generate from this Organization. Suriname does so.

For Suriname, many aid programmes from the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies have been hampered by the implementation of one of the main criteria for assistance. Suriname was counted among the net contributors of the United Nations Development Programme because our national per capita income was calculated to be higher than $3,000. This figure is wrong because of an unrealistic official exchange rate. Now that the official exchange rate has moved to a realistic level, which is more than 100 times the former rate, Suriname is looking forward to a readjustment of its status and subsequently to a reclassification, and also to the aid programme that will follow this transformation.

We are involved in an evolutionary process, with both the world and the United Nations adjusting to new demands with regard to peace, security and sustainable development. It is clear that a new international order based on the democratic participation of all States calls for a restructuring and strengthening of the United Nations in response to its new responsibilities. Indeed, the role of the United Nations has taken on more

relevance than ever before, and it is most urgent for the international community to restructure this Organization in order to enable it to play the important role for which it was created.

The celebration in 1995 of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will be a good occasion on which to reflect on the new role of the Organization and the attainment of that objective, provided that the relations between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General are reorganized.

My Government is committed to contributing to the successful outcome of this endeavour.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Suriname for the statement he has just made.

His Excellency Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 ***(continued)***

General debate

The President *(interpretation from French):* I now call on His Excellency The Honourable André Ouellet, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Ouellet (Canada) *(interpretation from French):* Canada is very pleased, Sir, that you have been elected to the presidency of the Assembly, and it is certain that you will, with tact and efficiency, assume the responsibility of guiding our work. You can count on our full cooperation.

The United Nations has always had a special place in Canada's foreign policy. As I address the Assembly for the first time as Minister of Foreign Affairs, I am reminded of something one of my illustrious predecessors, Lester B. Pearson, said about the United Nations:

> "We must cultivate international ideals, develop international policies, strengthen international institutions, above all the United Nations, so that peace and progress can be made secure."

The Government that I represent shares his broad and noble vision of the role and place of the United Nations. In order to face the challenges that await it at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the international community needs, more than ever, a strong, credible multilateral institution equipped with the tools needed to fulfil our expectations.

These challenges are the maintenance of peace and international security, as well as development, justice, democracy, human rights and the fight against inequalities. At a time when we are preparing to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, there is no more urgent task than the intensification of our efforts for reform in order to give our Organization the second wind it needs. Let us draw inspiration from the vision and enthusiasm of the people who drafted the Charter of the United Nations 50 years ago.

The extensive upheavals that have shaken our planet since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the cold war can be symbolized in a few images. I am thinking of the moving image of President Nelson Mandela taking the oath of office as democratically elected President of South Africa and the historic handshake between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the Palestine Liberation Organization leader, Yasser Arafat. For their people and those in Cambodia, El Salvador - and soon, perhaps, Mozambique and Angola - who have discovered the road to peace, with the help of the United Nations, the future is filled with hope.

There is also hope in Haiti, where a courageous people has been subjected for too long to oppression and abject poverty. We shall share their joy when they can finally welcome to his native land President Aristide, a living symbol of nascent democracy.

But there are also unbearable images of the victims in the market in Sarajevo and the flood of humanity fleeing the killings in Rwanda.

The international community cannot remain indifferent to conflicts that threaten the lives of millions of innocent people and expose them to the worst violations of their most fundamental rights. Recent experience has shown us that only a concerted and determined effort on the part of the international community can solve these problems.

It is no easy task. Faced with the problems in Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda or even Haiti, some people will be tempted to give up and wonder if the United Nations is wrong in trying to resolve essentially internal conflicts that have numerous complex causes.

Canada does not share this opinion. We think that, despite these problems, the Security Council is on the right track, even though the steps it has taken have not always proved capable of solving all the problems. Consistent with that belief, we have always made a tangible contribution to United Nations operations, as far as our circumstances permit.

The Canadian contribution to peace-keeping operations in the territories of the former Yugoslavia totals more than 2,000 soldiers and civilian police. The Canadian Government decided a few days ago to renew once more the mandate of its troops for a six-month period. Canada has always been convinced that there can be no military solution to the Yugoslavian conflict. It is because we wish to give peace another chance that we have chosen to maintain our contribution to the United Nations Protection Force.

We have also responded to the Secretary-General's appeal for help in the tragedy of Rwanda. For two months ours was the only country providing an air bridge to Kigali. There are 600 Canadian soldiers serving under the United Nations flag, and many Canadian non-governmental organizations have mobilized to provide help to those in distress.

We will also be in Haiti, with 600 soldiers and 100 police officers when the time comes to deploy the United Nations peace-keeping force. Our participation is a logical sequel to our numerous efforts of the past three years to restore the democratic process in this country, to which we are attached by language, geographical proximity and the many personal ties between our peoples. The Haitian people can count on Canada's lasting help as they rebuild their economy.

We are also contributing to the Middle East peace process. As the leader of the multilateral Working Group on Refugees, we are tackling with determination that task entrusted to us by the international community. Our objective is to contribute to the construction of a renewed region where, 10 years hence, no one will consider himself or herself a refugee. We are also providing substantial financial assistance to the Palestinian people's reconstruction projects. We would favourably consider sending peace-keepers if the need should arise, thus carrying on a lengthy tradition of Canadian participation in peace-keeping operations in the region.

(spoke in English)

The economic and social problems facing the international community often receive less headline attention than the armed conflicts. However, they are every bit as urgent. Hundreds of millions of people around the world continue to be condemned to a life of poverty. For whole sectors of humanity, such basic needs as a proper diet, drinking water, education and medical care are more of a dream than a reality.

Certain parts of the developing world are currently experiencing remarkable progress, while others, unfortunately - the African continent in particular - are continuing to struggle.

It is estimated that there are an unprecedented 19 million refugees and displaced persons in the world. We are witnessing a massive movement of people that none of our societies is able to manage without the cooperation of the entire international community.

The recent Cairo Conference revealed the urgent need for effective measures to cope with the problems of population and development, problems that cannot be resolved without giving full recognition to the essential roles of women.

Our ability to translate into reality the concept of sustainable development will have a very direct impact on the daily lives of our fellow citizens. The fishermen of Newfoundland and the Maritime Provinces of Canada are all too familiar with this problem. Their livelihood has disappeared, through the plundering of fish stocks in international waters off our shores. This is why we believe an agreement must be reached without delay on fishing on the high seas.

We could easily add to the list of pressing problems that I have just mentioned. And no one can challenge the fact that all of these problems - from peace-keeping to development, including the fight against AIDS, drug-trafficking and the protection of human rights and the environment - require a determined, coordinated effort on the part of the international community.

A great deal has been done over the past few years to help our multilateral institutions to effectively face these numerous challenges. However, much more needs to be done. Too often, the intervention of the United Nations comes too late, is too slow and is carried out under inadequate conditions.

The lack of political will on the part of Member States cannot be blamed on the Secretary-General. On the contrary, I would like to pay special tribute to the Secretary-General and his staff. They have done more and better than anyone should expect from an institution deprived of the most elementary resources, lacking even a solid financial foundation.

We must fully assume our responsibilities and give the United Nations the tools required to fulfil its unique mandate successfully. However, it seems that we are unable to take a second look at the habits of the past.

We invest too much energy in activities of marginal use and in unimportant quarrels when there is an emergency right under our noses.

We waste valuable resources by allowing the numerous institutions and agencies we have created over the years to jealously protect their independence and resist change when circumstances require a pooling of energies.

As a result of our extreme reticence to implement administrative reforms, we are handicapping the only institution on which we can depend, when modern and flexible management methods would enable us to respond much more effectively to the needs of the moment.

Canada believes that the reforms of the United Nations system must be deepened and accelerated. We must do more and better with the resources at our disposal.

Efforts should be concentrated on the following five major priorities, which I would like to bring to your attention.

Firstly, we must strengthen the United Nations system's capacity for preventive action. The United Nations already has a number of tools for detecting potential conflicts, and can use a variety of mechanisms to try to eliminate problems before crises break out. Lack of information is not the problem; what we need is the ability to better analyse this information, to develop appropriate strategies and above all to mobilize energy from all components of the system.

In order to act rapidly, the United Nations must be able to count on qualified human resources, available on short notice, to complement its own personnel. This is why Canada has prepared for the Secretary-General an inventory of resource persons suited to missions of good offices or specializing in elections, human rights, the administration of justice and other such fields.

At its first summit in January 1992, the Security Council recognized that non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to international peace and security. Let us recognize once and for all the need to expand the traditional concept of security, and to mobilize all components of the United Nations system to attack conflict at its very roots.

We also feel that the preventive capacity of the United Nations system will be strengthened if we make better use of the expertise of those who have direct knowledge of the field. The United Nations Economic and Social Council should periodically hold public hearings, similar to those held last June on the Agenda for Development, with a view to assisting the United Nations to better anticipate problems and to develop strategies for attacking the economic and social causes of conflicts. The findings of its hearings could and should be provided to the Security Council and the Secretary-General so that they can develop appropriate preventive measures.

Any strategy for preventing armed conflicts also involves pursuing tangible disarmament objectives. Canada has established two priority objectives for the next few years: nuclear non-proliferation and the control of conventional arms.

Nuclear arms control and disarmament are under way: we are continuing negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty to ban nuclear testing for all time. Canada is working in the Conference on Disarmament to secure a mandate for negotiations on a convention to prohibit the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. Together, these treaties will have the effect of constraining and preventing a future nuclear arms race.

In 1995 we will have to decide the fate of the world's nuclear non-proliferation regime; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is very important for Canada, and we believe that there is only one option: that the NPT must be indefinitely extended. I urge all Governments to support this option, which will allow for the continuation of a crucial instrument in preventing the spread of nuclear-weapon technology and provide new impetus to reduce existing stocks.

We must also recognize that, although the threat of nuclear weapons is of prime concern, the ongoing use of conventional weapons is an equally dangerous and very real threat to peace and security.

The task of controlling conventional weapons is the responsibility of every Government. Huge sums are being spent each year purchasing such weapons, often to the detriment of services essential to the public, such as education and health care. Those who are more concerned about the size of their military arsenal than about the welfare of their people should no longer expect to receive unconditional international aid.

The recently established United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is a start, and I urge Member States to make information available to the Register as Canada has done.

More can be done, however. For example, next year we will be reviewing the Convention on certain conventional weapons that deals with land-mines. The abuse of land-mines is responsible for continued suffering and death of civilians long after the fighting has stopped. I welcome the proposal made by President Clinton on Monday to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of anti-personnel land mines. He can count on the support and assistance of the Government of Canada on this useful idea. We must strengthen the Convention by extending its scope to cover internal as well as international conflicts and by insisting on effective verification measures to ensure compliance. We will create a task force in Canada to consider other initiatives that might be taken in the coming months, and I look forward to sharing ideas on this subject with other ministers.

Secondly, we must conduct an in-depth review of the United Nations economic and social activities. I think I speak for most members of the Assembly when I express serious concerns regarding what can best be described as the drift of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors. While the debate on the United Nations mandate in the areas of peace and security is lively and productive, it is unfortunately too often vague and directionless when we tackle economic and social problems.

We are not saying that everything must be changed - far from it. But certain reforms have already been introduced; to mention but one, we welcome the decision to make the United Nations Development Programme Administrator responsible for system-wide coordination. But at a time when large sectors of international economic activities are beyond the control of States, and when the resources devoted to development and international cooperation are subject to all manner of constraint in all of our countries, we must rethink the role and mandate of all our multilateral institutions, including those of Bretton Woods. These questions will be taken up at next year's Group of Seven summit, to be held in Halifax, and should be debated as widely as possible within other relevant institutions.

Canada is ready to proceed with a comprehensive re-evaluation of its multilateral system as it applies to economic and social issues. If necessary, the relevance of certain institutions must be rethought, and a real solution must be found to the problem of duplication.

We expect great things of the next chapter of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development. We share to a great extent his visions of development, which encompass all facets of human activity, and particularly its social dimensions. Although the full importance of these dimensions has finally been grasped, they are still poorly integrated in our development strategies. The time has come to translate this vision into new operational priorities and to adapt our institutions and structures to it. The Secretary-General should not hesitate to recommend radical reform if necessary. Together we can restore the relevance and leadership of the United Nations system. We must adapt it to the new realities of an ever-changing world.

Thirdly, we must strengthen the rapid-intervention capability of the United Nations. The implementation of a number of the proposals advanced by the Secretary-General in "An Agenda for Peace" has enabled the United Nations to make great strides in the area of peace-keeping. Last April the Government of Canada took the initiative of inviting the major troop-contributing countries to a meeting in Ottawa to discuss problems associated with political direction, command and control and the training of peace-keeping- operations personnel.

In this regard, I am pleased to announce that Canada will soon open a centre for peace-keeping research and training. The centre, to be located on the site of the former military base in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia, will be named after Lester B. Pearson, Canadian recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. I invite Member States to come and join us so they can share our experience and help fine-tune our future approach.

The experience of the last few years leads us to believe that we need to explore even more innovative options than those considered to date. Recent peace-keeping missions have demonstrated the limitations of the traditional approach. As we now fully realize, rapid deployment of intervention forces is essential.

In the light of the prevailing situation, the Government of Canada has decided to conduct an in-depth review of the short-, medium- and long-term options available to us to strengthen the rapid-response capability of the United Nations in times of crisis. From among these options, we feel that the time has come to study the possibility, over the long term, of creating a permanent United Nations military force. We will ask the world's leading experts for their input and will inform all Member States of the results of the study.

(spoke in French)

Fourthly, we must improve the functioning of United Nations decision-making bodies.

The Security Council currently bears enormous responsibilities. Its decisions are binding on all Member States and have a determining influence on millions of people. It is essential that the Council be able to reflect as accurately as possible the wishes of the entire international community. For this reason, it is imperative that the composition of the Council be reviewed. By making the Council more representative of today's world, we can enhance the legitimacy of its actions and facilitate their implementation. Canada will continue to play an active role in the negotiations launched during the last session of the General Assembly, with a view to concluding an agreement as soon as possible.

However, an expanded Council must not be seen as a panacea. As we have said on a number of occasions, the Council must make its working methods more transparent and become more receptive to the viewpoints of non-member States with special concerns. More specifically, Canada has advocated closer dialogue between the Council and troop-contributing countries. The informal practices developed in recent years are a good start, but in our view we must look for practical ways to institutionalize them. We ask the members of the Council to keep an open mind in this regard.

Finally, we must put the United Nations on a sound financial footing.

It goes without saying that the United Nations can fulfil the mandates we give it only to the extent that Member States meet their financial obligations and contribute generously to its voluntary funds. The sums in question are no doubt modest when compared with those invested elsewhere, but they represent none the less a burden that is already significant and growing larger at a time when many of our countries, Canada most definitely included, are going through a difficult period of budgetary adjustment.

Our taxpayers do not question the need to contribute to the United Nations, but they are entitled to expect that their contributions will be spent judiciously. That is why we attach such great importance to the need for sound management of the system's resources. The recent creation of the new position of inspector general should help tighten controls and improve administrative practices. There is also a need to review budgetary procedures in order to make them more transparent and to simplify those that govern peace-keeping operations.

Reviewing the scale of assessments is always a perilous undertaking, but I believe the need to do so has become urgent. The current system suffers from serious distortions and no longer reflects properly Member States' ability to pay. We hope the General Assembly will make this a priority issue at the current session.

In the final analysis, the future of the United Nations depends on the willingness of its Member States to lend it political and practical support. This support depends in turn on the degree of support the Organization receives from our respective citizenries. It is not only Member States' credibility that is at stake, but, even more important, that of the United Nations.

Governments must strive to work together and in cooperation with private enterprise and non-governmental organizations to define our new vision of the United Nations for the next century. This is, in part, why the Canadian Government has provided support to the Canadian Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. That Committee, which brings together leaders from all sectors, has prepared a remarkable programme of activities to commemorate the anniversary everywhere in our country. The emphasis is being placed on youth education and the main subjects of the United Nations agenda.

Next year at this time, all eyes will be turned towards the General Assembly. Let us make that

anniversary the beginning of a new era for the United Nations.

The President *(interpretation from French):* The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mr. Shimon Peres. I now call on him.

Mr. Peres (Israel): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We are pleased that the representative of Côte d'Ivoire - a nation for which Israel has high regard - has been elected to this distinguished post. I should like to express to the Secretary General our deepest appreciation for his contribution to world peace in general, and to peace in the Middle East in particular.

A year ago, I offered a concept for a new Middle East. Many applauded; more remained sceptical. What at that time seemed lofty is today a reality. I feel I can submit today an invitation to a further journey in the new Middle East.

Last year was a year of remarkable events. The Palestinian people, as a result of our agreement, gained authority in Gaza and Jericho; Jordan and Israel agreed, in the Washington Declaration, to end the state of war and move towards an agreement of full peace; voices of promise are exchanged between Damascus and Jerusalem; multilateral meetings produced a network of regional cooperation; Morocco and Israel established formal relations; and an agenda for a new Middle East will emerge from an unprecedented economic conference in Casablanca next month.

The desire for peace is rooted in the millenniums of Jewish existence. Generations prayed for it, and now a young generation in Israel is today engaged in making it. The search for peace is shared by young people all over the Middle East, Arabs and Israelis alike. We have to fulfil their hope.

I am addressing this Assembly for the first time, not as a party to a controversy, but as a representative of a country that has shown a capacity to solve conflicts that seemed insoluble.

The United Nations should play an increasing role facing the changing times. It can define new destinies. It can adopt new means.

As the United Nations celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, it may adopt models for new endeavours by mobilizing builders to construct peace, not just by deploying troops to keep it. Economic structures will offer more than military deployment.

Gaza, as an example, has a new authority. It needs a new economy. The United Nations can provide an answer. The 7,000 years of Gaza are mainly a history of suffering. Its population density today is among the highest in the world.

There is a role for the United Nations in Gaza, and it has played one. It began by stationing troops - which were recalled, unfortunately, on the eve of the Six-Day War. Then UNRWA came and supplied food, health and education to the refugees. Then UNDP contributed greatly to the construction of an infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.

The United Nations can help Gaza today become free from want. It can introduce there the necessary economic and proper social institutions. An enlarged allocation for Gaza, with the existing United Nations administration, will produce immediate results and may make Gaza a new model of United Nations endeavours.

The world is moving from military might to social priorities. It is time to turn from political confrontation to economic cooperation. In the Middle East, economic growth can compensate for political compromises.

We no longer live in a closed world. The intensive flow of information has opened the eyes of many people. No longer can tyranny blind their perceptions. Iron curtains can no longer bar the spread of the true story. Knowledge has finally overcome propaganda.

This current is profound and lasting. The sources of strength and wealth are today universal rather than national, intellectual rather than material. The size of the territory, the number of its people, the wealth of its raw materials, no longer decide the fate of a nation. It is the scope of education, the level of science, applied technology and up-to-date information that make all the difference.

Intellectual sources are no longer partitioned by traditional divides. Science has no territorial limits. Technology has no national flags. Information can travel without visas. Armies cannot conquer wisdom. Borders cannot protect knowledge. The talent of creation is replacing the strategies of destruction. Computers, not

rifles, mark the difference. The hunting season in history is disappearing.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

This does not mean an end to agonies. Starvation, disease, terrorism, desertification, nuclear weapons, ecological damage and dangerous drugs overflow the boundaries of land and the boundaries of reason.

Violence employs new tactics: it has not disappeared. Confrontations in the future may not necessarily be wars of conquest, but bloodshed of protest. The strong know that they will not be strengthened by dominating the poor, or by owning their deserts. The poor cannot, and will not, comply with their conditions, tolerated by the indifference of the well-off.

Existing institutions were initiated in a different time. They are based today on memories rather than on needs. Ministries of foreign affairs and defence were structured to confront enemies. Now we face dangers more than enemies, but without our being organized to handle them. We are not answering the need. Diplomacy and strategy should be mobilized to face the undefined dangers. Disease will not be overcome by traditional diplomatic *démarches*. Starvation cannot be eliminated by guns. Deserts will not bloom beneath air raids. Remedies will not arrive of their own accord: they should be invented and introduced.

Israel is on the side of this tendency. We are committed to ending the conflicts. We are determined to uproot their causes. We do not intend to stop this momentum or allow its interruption.

For the last five decades the mere existence of Israel has served as a temptation to try and destroy it. For half a century we had to give security top priority. To this very day, we shed tears on the tombs of our children, who paid with their young lives to overcome the menace. When wars became futile, suspicion succeeded fighting. The allegation was that Israel was trying to expand territorially and was unwilling to compromise geographically. Reality ended this allegation as well.

Egypt, first to negotiate peace, found an Israel willing to exchange land for peace. The Palestinians, next in line, gained jurisdiction over territories they had never controlled before. With Jordan, we agreed to delineate a permanent border without one side encroaching on the land of the other. Syria was told at the outset of negotiations that the nature of peace would affect the depth of the withdrawal. Lebanon was told that Israel had no demands on its territory and no intention of compromising its integrity.

Negotiations have not been easy. With the Palestinians, we negotiated on uncharted ground. Never had the Palestinian people experienced self-rule. Today they possess a territorial address and an administrative authority. For the first time in their history, their children's education is solely in Palestinian hands. In the coming days Israel will hand over additional responsibilities to the Palestinian Authority. The Declaration of Principles will be fully implemented in the spirit and letter. We shall support a Palestinian readiness to hold democratic elections.

Israel, as well as the Palestinians, may discover that Palestinian democracy and Israeli security are complementary. We have demonstrated that we are true in our moral choice not to govern the destiny of another people.

We shall continue to negotiate with Syria. We are negotiating out of conviction, not weakness, and we hope to conclude the negotiations with a settlement that will respect the interests of both sides, without harming Syrian dignity or compromising Israeli security. Syria insists on a narrow path for the negotiations, postponing meetings between the leaders and thus slowing the pace of negotiations. Israel is ready for accelerated negotiations. We address the Syrians by saying: "Let us talk face to face. Let us negotiate, as proclaimed in Damascus, with courage to attain a peace of honour. By ending suspicion, introducing creativity and allowing flexibility, we can transform a promising climate into a solid terrain." Syria declared its strategy for peace. We appreciate it.

Military threats and territorial positions should be transformed by security arrangements, diplomatic rapport, full peace and economic endeavours. That will erode the motivation for conflict. Without peaceful relations, balances of power are meaningless. The range of understanding can serve as the only answer to the range of ballistic missiles.

President Clinton and Secretary of State Christopher are relentlessly pushing for peace. European, Russian and many other leaders are genuinely supportive. Important Middle Eastern leaders are actively engaged in

the same direction. Still, much depends on direct negotiations. Yesterday's enemies, tomorrow's partners, should become today's interlocutors.

A peace treaty between Israel and Syria may produce a historic result greater than just an agreement between two countries. It may well become the crowning of a comprehensive peace. It may become an opportunity for the leaders of the region - Kings, Presidents, Prime Ministers, supported by the most prominent leaders of our time - to gather and announce the end of the conflict and to proclaim full peace throughout the region.

Peace can hardly emerge from stinginess. By definition, it calls for generosity. Peace is more than a mere ceremony. It requires ongoing maintenance; it awaits a passionate cultivation of new relations. We hope that our neighbours, from Saudi Arabia to Lebanon, from Djibouti to Algeria, will become constructive partners in it. Dark clouds are still hanging over the horizon - the shadows of missed opportunities.

We have to build a coalition to prevent subversive turbulence from undermining legitimate Governments and harassing the stability needed for the inflow of investment. All countries of the Middle East face a choice: to remain politically divided and economically stagnant or to become economically advanced and politically just.

A high standard of living for the people - all people - is the best promise for stability in our midst. Israel is willing to participate in achieving it. There are sceptics, we know, who do not believe that the Middle East is ripe for a common market similar to the European one. They forget that Europe did not do it in one leap. It started with a Community of coal and steel. We can start with a community of water and tourism.

Nor do they believe that the Middle East is ready for a free trade zone like the one in North America. Yet the North American Free Trade Agreement emerged in a short while as a success by linking geographic proximity with economic growth. Those sceptics claim that generations are needed to cement a new market in the Middle East. Well, they can see what in 10 short years happened to Asian countries, which attained unpredicted prosperity. They achieved it by adopting a market economy.

The profile of a market economy is clear. It is made of comprehensive education, open borders, free movement, science-based industries and competitive trade. A market economy is a fabric woven from political silk and durable threads of welfare. The time is ripe for its rendezvous with the Middle East.

At the end of October, under the presidency of King Hassan II, we shall take the first step to implement a regional design. We shall try to establish instruments for development: a regional bank, channels for private investment and a framework for regional planning. The wealth of the Middle East should be convinced to remain at home. Over the last decade it has invested the better part of its fortunes abroad. Homebound wealth will attract foreign investment as well.

We should cut the enormous expense - $70 billion annually - of the arms race. The savings can be directed to development. The arms race can be reduced only by regional consent. No single country will do it alone.

To transform the region and make it a stable and attractive place we need the emergence of the region as a whole, committed to a new future. Nature, and not only politics, calls for it. The waters, the winds, the environment call for regional responsibility and cooperation, for desalinization plants, energy stations, highways, railways, runways, piers, telecommunication networks, high-tech industries, tourism infrastructure, banking systems, computer terminals and ecological considerations - a landscape that will meet the future will create a state of prosperity, and it is a regional challenge.

The Middle East was the cradle of civilization and has a capacity to contribute. It experienced golden ages, economically and culturally. It should be our collective ambition to make it happen again and to make it happen soon. Today, shortages can be bridged rapidly. Computers can carry children not only from grade to grade but from age to age. The software of knowledge will better replace the hardware of weapons.

I have served my country since its birth. I have learned that complex problems call for unconventional solutions. I feel that over the past year we have won a licence to build a new Middle East, to make it part of the globe in its new age, free of wars, free of enemies, free of terrorism; a Middle East which will be nuclear-free, missile-free, hunger-free, discrimination-free, tyranny-free; a constituency of peace, a domain of freedom, a land of prosperity. There is a morning awaiting us after a long night, calling us to direct our energies and our aims and our prayers towards that great opportunity.

The President returned to the Chair.

Address by Mr. Abdellatif Filali, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. Abdellatif Filali, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco, His Excellency Mr. Abdellatif Filali, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Filali (Morocco) *(interpretation from Arabic):* I am pleased to extend to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly and to express to you my great delight at seeing you, a distinguished friend from a sisterly country, conducting the work of this session.

Your competence and great diplomatic experience are assets which ensure the success of our deliberations. We are convinced that, through you, Africa will bring to this session its well-known capabilities and talents in order to secure the best results for our work. Allow me to assure you of the full cooperation of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

I should also like to pay tribute to His Excellency Ambassador Samuel Insanally, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guyana and President of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, for the laudable work he accomplished.

I should like also to express to our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, my sincere regards and appreciation for his untiring efforts in upholding the principles of the Charter and for the wisdom and the perspicacity with which he faces the increasing responsibilities assigned to the United Nations in recent years.

The end of the cold war gave the peoples of the world cause for hope that they were about to see the dawn of a new era in international relations, an era of democracy, justice and an effective international solidarity which would take into account the interests of all.

Years after that historic opportunity, we have come to realize that our optimism was unjustified. We are to see yet any sincere international effort towards the creation of a new world order and of the hoped-for peace dividends we have seen nothing concrete yet. On the contrary, what we see now makes us fear that that historic opportunity is on the verge of being dissipated in the fog of an ambiguous international political atmosphere.

A close examination of the characteristics of the present world order reveals that its thrust focuses almost totally on the issues of economic openness, freedom of international trade, democracy and human rights.

There is no doubt that these two last questions deserve every attention, since they are among the underpinnings of any system of honest government and of social justice and have always been among the goals of enlightened civilizations in their search for a fair society in which justice and social peace may prevail.

Maybe it would be going too far to insist, as some do, on the adoption of one model of democracy, out of all the other models, by all the countries and societies of the world without taking into account the numerous factors which have to do with the civilizations of the peoples of those countries, their customs, traditions, cultures, the degree of their development, their general conception of the universe we live in, or their views concerning life and society.

As regards our Organization, the principles of democracy require us to examine its methods of operation in order to secure a unified implementation of its resolutions and ensure efficiency in the discharge of its duties.

In view of the ever-increasing importance of the role the Security Council now plays in international affairs, we must debate the extent of its adaptation to the great changes that have taken place in the world recently and which have affected the balance of power, side by side with the new political and economic trends, so that we may find consensus solutions in reviewing the Security Council's methods of work and in trying to enhance its efficacy.

The changes I have spoken of require us to review also some of the provisions of the Charter with a view to enabling our Organization to face up to the new international challenges with the participation of all in the interests of all.

As for the question of human rights, the Kingdom of Morocco attaches great importance to those rights, which are enshrined in our constitution. However, I wish to point out - as I did in past years - that human rights have different aspects which must be respected fully. We should not focus solely on the political aspect whose importance has been established. The rights of the human being to the essential, basic human needs such as food, clothing, medicine and shelter are inalienable and fundamental, just exactly as the right to life. That is why the World Conference on Human Rights, which was convened in Vienna last year, determined that economic development which makes it possible to satisfy those needs was a fundamental human right.

Consequently, the affluent nations have an obligation to pay more attention to the economic interests of the developing world in order to help it reach the levels of development that will allow it to accord to those rights the priority they deserve.

In this context, we expect the World Summit for Social Development, which will take place in Copenhagen next year, to define the essential needs of man the satisfaction of which would guarantee a decent life and expect the Summit to set up a plan of action to stimulate social development and economic progress in the countries of the third world.

The world has entered upon a new era marked by fundamental changes in the traditional international relations which emphasized the primacy of political beliefs. In addition, the great Powers have engaged in a new race for economic interests in place of the arms race. The race that now concerns them is characterized by the strengthening of relations within great economic groupings with a view to the creation of new economic blocs. These developments will undoubtedly alter the economic and political map of the world and will, thereby, widen the gap between the developed and the developing countries.

In a much more interdependent world, thanks to the new means of communication and technology, such as live television broadcasts, it has become ever more difficult to persuade the peoples of the developing countries to be content with their lot while the disparities between the affluence of the developed countries and the misery of the developing countries are constantly worsening. Therefore, it would be illogical to expect that lasting peace and security could prevail in a world wherein the overwhelming majority of people live in despair, deprivation and social misery.

The rich countries should find satisfactory solutions to the economic problems of developing countries - in particular, to those related to the deterioration in terms of trade, the decline in commodity prices, external indebtedness and technological weaknesses.

In April 1994, the city of Marrakech hosted the signing of various agreements under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Through these agreements, the international community established the primacy of the rule of law in international economic and trade relations and put an end to the law of the primacy of strength that prevailed in the past.

The agreements, which were signed by 109 States, included a number of extremely positive elements. One of the most significant results of the Marrakech agreements was the creation of the World Trade Organization, which will come into being next year and will have competence in the areas of control and implementation. We hope that this new organization, thanks to its competences, the policies laid for it, and the programme of work designed to pursue those policies will be able to lay real foundations for international trade that would free trade from the protectionism that plagues it under many guises such as the so-called social considerations that relate to workers' rights and environmental considerations.

In the aftermath of the Second World War and the setting up of the United Nations, international relations have been characterized essentially by the movement towards the liberation of peoples from the colonial yoke, especially in Africa and Asia. Nowadays, only some enclaves remain from the colonial era. For particular reasons, those enclaves required more time for their liberation, and they are now involved in settlement processes with the agreement of the interested parties.

The British colony of Hong Kong will revert to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, as will the Portuguese colony of Macau in the near future. Similarly, the status of Gibraltar is the subject of continuous discussions between Spain and the United Kingdom with a view to the return of that Territory to Spanish sovereignty.

These are settlement processes that we in Morocco strongly support.

As we know, some enclaves in the northern part of Morocco are still under Spanish control. These are the cities of Sebta and Melilia and the neighbouring islands. Since its accession to independence, my country has tirelessly asked Spain to return those enclaves so that we may restore our territorial integrity and put an end to this long-standing dispute.

There is no doubt the ideal solution in this respect would be to follow the same procedure that was adopted in the case of each of the territories I have just mentioned, namely, dialogue, natural understanding and harking to the voice of wisdom by heeding the logic of our time and taking into account the interests of both parties.

We believe that the Moroccan-Spanish group proposed by His Majesty King Hassan II to reflect and consult on that question is the best framework within which it would be possible to reach a settlement that may safeguard the sovereign rights of Morocco and, at the same time, allows Spain to protect its economic interests.

We are convinced that the historic ties of civilization between Morocco and Spain as well as our relations of good-neighbourliness and our fruitful cooperation in several areas will make it possible to overcome the difficulties that lie in the way of the settlement of this dispute.

The freeing of relations between Morocco and Spain from the remnants of the past is a matter of significant importance in view of the fact that both countries belong to the Mediterranean region, that sensitive part of the world which should be a region of cooperation, stability and solidarity.

In this context, we are convinced that the prosperity and security of Europe and particularly of its Mediterranean countries could not be fully achieved without genuine efforts to contribute to the development of the southern Mediterranean countries. We are also convinced that this will be achieved only through the eradication of the existing gap between the countries of the two sides of the Mediterranean and the establishment of a multifaceted cooperation that would be inspired by a comprehensive vision of the concept of cooperation and anchored in the will of both sides to enter into a partnership that may provide a solid foundation for the prosperity and stability of the region.

Proceeding from this conviction, the Kingdom of Morocco proposed to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe at its fourth session held in December 1993 in Rome, the convening of a ministerial meeting to address the issues of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region in which all the Mediterranean countries as well as all other countries interested in the future of that sensitive region would participate in order to consult over the various issues and problems that face the region. We do hope that the proposal will gain the support of the countries concerned.

Along with our brethren from the countries of the Arab Maghreb, Morocco has made sustained efforts aimed at securing the unity of the region and ensuring the coming to being of the institutions of such unity.

However, it is no secret to anyone that the achievement of the desired unity still faces certain difficulties regardless of all that has been accomplished so far at the institutional, structural and regulatory levels. Nevertheless, it is the conviction of all concerned that the setting up of that edifice will benefit all the people of the region and will open up great vistas in the areas of development and progress.

It is obvious that the pace of progress towards the achievement of the desired objectives is rather slow at the time. However, my country remains prompted by a sincere determination and by a firm will to overcome those difficulties, in the conviction that its future and that of the countries of the region depend to a great extent on the achievement of such unity and solidarity amongst them. In all this, there is the awareness that the ties of common heritage, of common history, of culture, of language and of religion bind all our peoples together.

With regard to the so-called question of Western Sahara, the United Nations settlement plan has entered the final stage of implementation. The Kingdom of Morocco has cooperated sincerely with the Secretary-General, as attested to in the Secretary-General's reports, with a view to facilitating his mission and speeding up the ongoing process. Therefore, we look forward with optimism to the holding of the referendum within the next few months.

The past decade was one of the most disastrous for the African continent in economic and in social terms. The limited international effort provided to assist the continent has not yielded any improvement so far. As a matter of fact, standards of living in many sub-Saharan

countries continue to worsen as the per capita income continues to decline while the growth rate of the gross national product dropped to less than 1.5 per cent at a time when the population grows at a much greater rate.

Thus the overall economic situation in Africa has fallen to a level below the one recorded in the seventies. Because of such constant deterioration and the marginalization from which Africa suffers, partial and temporary solutions cannot satisfy us. Exceptional international efforts should be undertaken and drastic solutions designed to remedy to the situation.

On the occasion of the holding of the historic meeting of Marrakech, in the context of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Agreements, His Majesty the King has called upon the leaders of the world to integrate the economy of Africa in the global economy and urged the elaboration of a Marshall Plan with a view to reducing poverty and alleviating the suffering of millions of human beings in our continent.

As an African country, the Kingdom of Morocco continues to do its utmost in assisting sisterly countries in the sub-Saharan region by all the means at its disposal. In fact, my country channels 90 per cent of the funds it allocates to international cooperation to the assistance of sisterly African countries.

During the month of April 1994, the African scene witnessed an important event, namely, the victory of democratic forces, the forces of peace and freedom, against the forces of racial discrimination. Thus, South Africa's first free elections in which all segments of its people participated have resulted in the election of Mr. Nelson Mandela to the presidency of the Republic.

The Kingdom of Morocco had earlier expressed its satisfaction at those decisive developments, which ended a half-century-long conflict and allowed South Africa, a sister country, to usher in a new era of national harmony and democracy and give it reason to look forward to a prosperous future for all its people. My country made its contribution by giving an impetus to the reconciliation process through meeting with and offering encouragement to Presidents Mandela and De Klerk, both known for their wisdom and clearsightedness.

We were one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the new South Africa - more than two years ago now - and we will make every effort to strengthen the basis of our cooperation with that country, which, to our great satisfaction, has taken back its rightful place within the United Nations. We have no doubt that South Africa will greatly and positively contribute to the enrichment and effectiveness of the work of our Organization and to the well-being of the entire African continent.

One year after the signing in Washington of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements in Gaza and Jericho, between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, we note today that the peace process in the Middle East is moving along at a steady pace, thus giving rise to some optimism for the first time in the last 50 years.

In spite of the hindrances and obstacles it faces from time to time, this agreement is being effectively and practically implemented. We hope that this encouraging start will continue and will include all the occupied Palestinian territory, and that it will result in the transfer of all powers to the Palestinian National Authority to pave the way for a comprehensive solution that would grant the totality of its legitimate rights to the Palestinian people, including the creation of an independent State with Al-Quds as its capital, in accordance with the United Nations resolutions.

It was only natural that the Palestinian self-government experience should face initial difficulties and experience sensitive beginnings. We hope that the States members of the international community that have followed this issue for decades and that supported the struggle of the Palestinian people throughout its different stages will not fail to grant all the necessary material aid and assistance to the Palestinian National Authority during this delicate period, in order to help it build its national institutions and its economic structures, and to ensure the success of this experience.

Similarly, Jordan and Israel have signed an agreement recently in Washington. However, the advent of peace and security in that region will always depend on the achievement of a comprehensive solution, which would guarantee the recovery of Syrian and Lebanese territories, in conformity with international legality and in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

The Kingdom of Morocco, convinced of the virtues of dialogue and concerted action among the parties to the Arab Israeli conflict, was one of the first to recommend and promote this approach as the ideal means for the

settlement of disputes. My country strongly believes that the logic of war and violence does not lead to permanent solutions. That is why we feel a great deal of satisfaction today as we see the parties in the Middle East engaging in a constructive dialogue to achieve an agreement that would put paid to conflicts and tragedies and usher in a new era of peace, cooperation and well-being in the region's history.

In order to encourage peace efforts and to make the Arab world benefit from their dividends, Morocco will host next month, in Casablanca, an Economic Conference for the Middle East and North Africa. Highly placed government officials, and businessmen as well as financial and economic experts will participate in the Conference. This gathering will aim at setting the rules for boosting the economy and development in the two regions, and at creating economic programmes based on partnership for the benefit of the countries of the two regions and their peoples.

Regarding the dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates, we hope that the two countries, which are members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, will resort to dialogue to resolve their dispute over the future of the islands of Abu Moussa and the Greater and the Lesser Tumbs. The historic and friendly relations between the two peoples, which allowed them to coexist under United Arab Emirates sovereignty on Abu Moussa island, should enable them to return to normal relations.

Contemporary history has known few tragedies comparable to the one being experienced by the people of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who have been, and still are, subjected to all kinds of collective punishments, massacres, "ethnic cleansing", displacement, confiscation of property, destruction of places of worship and demolition of cultural monuments. The inability of the international community and of the United Nations in particular to put an end to these outrageous criminal acts and their inability to uphold the principles of international law, which is violated daily by Serbian practices, is intolerable and unacceptable.

Our Organization will celebrate next year its fiftieth anniversary. The period that has elapsed since its inception has known many activities and accomplishments but also some failures and setbacks. As regards its accomplishments, one should underline its sustained action to liberate peoples from the colonial yoke and to assist them in obtaining their political independence, as well as its activities aiming at the settlement of many conflicts by peaceful means and the maintenance of international peace and security through, *inter alia*, peace-keeping operations. Its specialized institutions and agencies have also made considerable contributions through their great efforts in social, health and cultural matters.

However, our Organization has been unable to accomplish some tasks entrusted to it by the Charter. I refer in particular to economic and development issues. No large-scale action has been taken to help developing countries in particular achieve economic development, despite the efforts and the many meetings devoted to this question.

This fiftieth anniversary will take place in an international environment that is totally different from the one that followed the Second World War. Our Organization must adapt to this change by exploring the prospects of the twenty-first century, of which we are on the threshold.

To this end, several ideas have been put forward with the aim of strengthening our Organization, reforming its structures and affording it the means whereby it could meet the new and increasing demands made upon it in many areas. In short, the aim is to enable the Organization to satisfy the current needs of the international community. The Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" appeared at the right moment to show us the appropriate means by which the organs of the United Nations might serve international peace and security. The report also introduced new ideas concerning preventive diplomacy with the aim of preventing the eruption of new conflicts and dealt with the issues of building and maintaining peace, as well as many other issues, and put forth proposals which we are sure will improve the functioning of our Organization.

There is no doubt that the fiftieth anniversary celebrations will be an opportunity for many world leaders and other high officials that are rich in experience to rethink the future of our Organization in order to enable it to meet the highest aspirations of mankind in the twenty-first century: to live in peace and security, in social justice and human dignity.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call upon the Minister for Foreign Relations of Panama, His Excellency Mr. Gabriel Lewis Galindo.

Mr. Lewis Galindo (Panama) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: First of all allow me to say how pleased we are at your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Since you are such an eminent statesman, we are certain that this session will be a resounding success. We hail the work accomplished by Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana, who presided over the recently concluded session of the General Assembly. We are grateful to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the Organization, for the fine job he is doing, reflecting his constant concern with helping to build a more just and progressive world society on the basis of the purposes and principles of the San Francisco Charter.

This past May, the Panamanian people completed an irreproachable electoral process. The results now make it possible for us to undertake the democratic reconstruction of the State, with broad-based and cooperative participation by all of Panama's various social groupings.

This has made it possible for us to develop promising new relations of understanding and cooperation with the Government of the United States, grounded in a common resolve to fulfil on schedule the timetable established by the Torrijos-Carter Treaties on the Panama Canal and associated territories. Furthermore, we are seeking to extend our relations, as partners and friends of the United States, into fields that will facilitate the solution of regional and world problems affecting the stability of areas of common interest to both nations. With maturity, and an intense sense of dignity and patriotism, the Government of Panama is embarking on a new era in our relations with the United States.

Thus these Treaties today are becoming once more for our two nations what we intended them to be when they were signed 17 years ago: the feasibility of a great Power and a small country working together, peacefully, to achieve mutually beneficial results on matters that previously gave rise to confrontation. Furthermore, this is in keeping with the principles of international law and gives us all new cause for hope concerning the new era the world is now seeking to establish.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Pursuant to those Treaties, the Government headed by Mr. Ernesto Pérez Balladares intends in a responsible manner to put into effect the timetable of reversion to Panama of all the lands, waters and installations that form the Canal and its contiguous area. Similarly, we intend to ensure full demilitarization of the waterway and, consequently, we are planning as of now the prompt conversion of the foreign military installations there into industrial and trading posts of international interest, whose operations will be carried out just a few scant yards from the vessels that pass through day by day, heading towards all points of the compass.

The decisions we have taken will ensure that this strip of territory will become one of the most attractive areas for investment in the Atlantic, the Americas, and the Pacific Basin.

Despite Panama's intense economic and cultural energy, it is a small country. Hence developing this project will require international cooperation. In the short term, the new Panamanian Government intends to coordinate this cooperation in order to take the best possible advantage of a tremendous potential.

In this context, we shall convene in 1997 the World Congress on the Panama Canal to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. This event will bring together the users of the Canal and the potential users of the associated facilities - shipbuilders, industrialists, financiers, technical experts, planners and leaders of higher education - to consider the scope and orchestration of the entire development project for the Panama Canal and the Panamanian nation.

This Congress will also be an arena for the display of technology-, media- and communications-related products, as well as for interoceanic and intercontinental trade. It will therefore be of particular importance in gauging the scope of the new world trend which we now call "globalization". For this reason, we intend to plan this Congress with the cooperation of the United Nations as well as that of the two countries which, in their time, were engaged in the construction of the Canal - France and the United States.

There is another facet to this situation, however. We Panamanians have convincingly proved our ability to efficiently administer and operate the existing Canal; we shall demonstrate this once again at the World Congress. Yet we wish to make further use of these skills, and this desire forms the basis for the projects tied in with the current, final phase of implementation of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties: by this, I mean the international university conglomerate that we call the "*Ciudad del*

Saber", "the City of Knowledge". In this area, and with the excellent infrastructure facilities that will soon revert to Panama, we can bring together, in the best possible physical environment, faculties and departments of the major universities interested in studying subjects related to the next century and its prospects - subjects such as communications and telecommunications, naval and air transport, computer technology, international trade, the environment and sustainable development, as well as economic and business relations between our Americas and the Pacific basin.

Thus conceived, the City of Knowledge will replace military bases and foreign soldiers with an international conglomerate of universities and a great army of students and teachers from all corners of the world. This will be the best possible way to celebrate the end of the cold war and the development of new world circumstances, while at the same time making the new era accessible to many thousands of our young people. We are certain that this project will receive the necessary international cooperation and the support of the United Nations system.

There is another issue of similar, worldwide interest that deserves the attention of this forum. Although it is an interoceanic passageway, the Panama Canal is fed exclusively by fresh water. For this reason, its existence, the quality of its services and the possibility of expanding them depend on the renewal of its forests and the attention to the environment that is indispensable to feeding its basin, guaranteeing the water supply and making it possible for the Canal to operate.

This basin has suffered disturbing deterioration, which, should it continue, could jeopardize the services provided to the world by the Canal. Conscious of its responsibilities, our country has begun a series of national and international consultations with a view to devising a campaign that would secure the technical and financial resources needed to ensure the environmental conditions required for the improvement and optimal use of the Canal. This campaign could perhaps serve as a symbol of international cooperation in ensuring appropriate use of resources necessary to mankind.

Our country has recently rejoined the Rio Group - of which we were one of the initial promoters - as a full member. With respect to foreign policy, we fully concur with the purposes, declarations and agreements adopted by this group.

We Panamanians are sincerely resolved to expand our political dialogue and economic cooperation with neighbouring countries. To this end, we are pursuing the process of integration with the countries of Central America in all ways that can be mutually beneficial.

Because of its history and traditions, as well as for reasons of geographical proximity and economic affinity, Panama will be promoting links and integration with its South American neighbours, with which it shares the ideals of Bolivar.

At the same time, the great trading opportunities afforded us as a result of the reversion of the Panama Canal and its adjacent areas make it incumbent on us to strengthen our links with the countries of the Pacific basin, and to work together on projects and activities of mutual benefit.

For similar reasons, Panama, which already has a special relationship with the United States - a relationship that is taking on special significance today - intends to seek membership in the North American Free Trade Association, whose current members, Canada, the United States and Mexico, are certain to play a significant role in ensuring the best possible use of the Canal areas that will revert to Panama.

In recent times, the international community has noted symptoms of repeated crises in certain parts of the Caribbean area. Indeed, on certain specific conditions, Panama has offered parts of its national territory to help provide a temporary solution to the problem of the Haitian and Cuban raft and boat people. This gesture has been motivated solely by humanitarian considerations, without political or diplomatic implications. We shall continue to act in this manner, especially when it is useful in providing a grace period during which a peaceful, and agreed solution to the underlying causes of these problems may be found.

In the case of Haiti, my Government is particularly gratified that an agreement was reached which allowed for the landing of multinational forces in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolution and without the trauma of an invasion by force. We believe, none the less, that Haiti's problems will be solved only when all aspects of the Security Council resolution are fully implemented and, in terms of socio-economic issues, provided the international community helps eradicate the causes of the poverty and backwardness which persist there.

With respect to the situation in the fraternal Republic of Cuba, we believe that the causes underlying the conflict must be addressed. For this reason, my Government favours reforms which, through the exercise of self-determination, would guarantee the establishment of a multi-party democracy there. Furthermore, my Government is in favour of lifting the economic embargo that is such a burden on that country. Only by acting simultaneously on both fronts will it be possible to overcome this crisis. We are fully ready to assist the fraternal Caribbean nation of Cuba.

With the conclusion of the cold war, the world is focusing most of its attention on other problems, new and old, which now make up the world agenda - problems such as the current restructuring of systems of economic relations and international politics.

It must be stressed that in the handling of the phenomena known as "globalization", it is vital to establish a new order which will take into account the realities, interests, sovereign rights, and just aspirations of the small countries and the developing nations in general. Any development which, out of selfishness, indifference, inattention, or the like, fails to meet this requirement, will inevitably condemn us to a world riddled with yet further imbalance, marginalization and instability.

Mankind's hopes for the twenty-first century will be realized only if together we are able to build a much fairer, more equitable and more balanced future. This applies to all countries, be they rich or poor, weak or strong.

Specifically, such a future requires that we embark immediately on a vigorous programme of common and coordinated actions to eradicate mankind's greatest problem: poverty. Panama declares again today, before the Assembly, that it is willing to join the international programmes to combat poverty and promote solidarity and social equity, as well as those aimed at promoting a better quality of life for the sectors that are most deprived and least fairly treated. In particular, Panama will commit itself to efforts to improve the social situation of the family and of women and children.

In respect of this universal aspiration, women in Panama have already attained positions of relative importance in both political and professional arenas. Today, for the first time in the history of our Republic, the deserving President of our legislative organ is a woman who is a popular leader, while in our last elections another prominent female politician was a candidate for the presidency of the Republic of Panama, and she now leads the major opposition party. We are also proud to see Panamanian professional women serving in the Cabinet of Mr. Ernesto Pérez Balladares and as judges on our Supreme Court of Justice. In short, women in Panama play a leading and powerful role in all aspects of our political and private life, and they are often at the forefront of our technical, scientific and professional development. For this reason we shall continue to support actions that make it possible for women to achieve full and effective equality of rights and opportunities in an increasingly competitive world.

On another question, my country has decided to tackle firmly and unequivocally the problems of drug-trafficking, money-laundering and terrorism. We are currently devising a strategy to combat these terrible evils that imperil the very existence of our nations. We favour the development of joint, coordinated action on the international level. The community of nations faces a great challenge in these grave problems, and we fervently appeal to the Governments and the peoples of Latin America to create a powerful organization to combat them.

In another area, Panama is particularly attentive to the discussions aimed at defining a new role for the United Nations and the corresponding structural reforms this world Organization requires. With regard specifically to the structure of the United Nations, Panama believes it is necessary to increase the representativity of its most important decision-making bodies. In particular, my country believes that the Security Council must be enlarged. Panama wishes to reiterate that, whatever approach is taken, Latin America's participation in that body should be increased and Latin American countries should be given consideration as possible permanent members.

I am pleased to state that the new democratic Government of Panama fully accepts the commitment to bolster and enhance its presence in international agencies, where it is a Latin American and Caribbean voice that remains faithful to the rightful aspirations of the developing countries. This decision is reflected in the speech delivered by Ernesto Pérez Balladares when he was sworn in as my country's President. He said:

> "This is the new face that Panama is showing to its friends abroad. We are no longer at the stage of seeking solidarity on the Canal Treaty in order to regain the benefits of our geographic position. Now

we want to begin our participation in the new world that is challenging us all and to make known the potentialities of our geographic position, our desire to take advantage of all opportunities properly, fairly and respectfully, in the pursuit of an aggressive foreign policy free of complexes and capable of helping us surmount the challenges of the next century. We are friends to all. We are foes of none."

We look with optimism on the development of mankind and, in particular, that of my country. We will pass the baton to our young people on our country's path of progress, peace and justice.

Finally, on this occasion I also take pleasure in wishing you, Mr. President, every success in your task of leading the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.